

CLASSIC

POP

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The making
of Madonna's
True Blue

JOHN FOXX
The man from the city

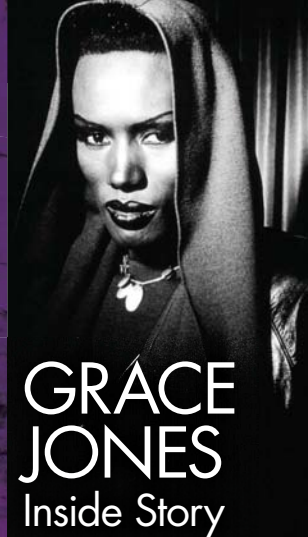
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PRINCE
**PURPLE
REIGN**
7 JUNE 1958
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EXCLUSIVE!

DEXYS
On The Record



GRACE
JONES
Inside Story

Down and
out with
BANANARAMA

INTERVIEWED

- Gary Barlow ●
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- Andy McCluskey ●
- Steve Jansen ●
- Tony Hadley ●
- Peter Cox ●
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ONE THING I'VE NOTICED... IT'S NOT THAT PRINCE WAS PROLIFIC (IF ANYTHING HE WAS HYPER-PROLIFIC: 39 ALBUM RELEASES FROM 1978 TO 2015). IT'S THAT, IN ADDITION TO HIS OWN CAREER AS A PERFORMER, HE'S BEEN ALMOST INVISIBLY UBIQUITOUS ACROSS THE LAST FIVE DECADES: DANCING AROUND BEHIND THE SCENES SONGWRITING, CO-WRITING, TALENT-SCOUTING, GUEST STARRING, DIRECTING AND ORCHESTRATING THE TEMPLATE OF POP AS WE KNOW IT.

23



So while we look back at Prince's greatest albums and singles, I'm revelling in everything else: the songs he donated to other artists which became massive, those that he wrote for protégés (does anyone even have protégés any more?), and guest spots, from Kate Bush's *Why Should I Love You* to Madonna's *Love Song*.

The highlights from this Now That's What I Call Prince playlist would include the songs which became hits for other artists, kick-starting their careers. Like Sinéad O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2 U*, The Bangles' *Manic Monday* and Chaka Khan's *I Feel For You*.

Then there were the songs that reinvented careers. Like Love... *Thy Will Be Done* for Martika, and my personal favourite, *Born To B.R.E.E.D.* for Monie Love. The biggest reinvention of all was Sheena Easton's *Sugar Walls*, taking her from Scottish sweetheart to feeling the wrath of Jimmy Swaggart and the American Parental Advisory brigade.

There was a time when an artist might have been mocked, or at least pigeon-holed, for being a Prince protégé. But who else A&R'd such a long line of talent and brought them to public

attention? Wendy & Lisa, Sheila E., Tevin Campbell and Taja Sevelle, groups like Vanity 6/Apollonia 6, The Family, Madhouse, Milenia, The Revolution and 3RDEYEGIRL. Of all of these I'll keep going back to Wendy & Lisa's *Lolly Lolly* or Ingrid Chavez's *May 19 1992* as much as I will *1999* or *Lovesexy*.

Track back at random 10-year intervals and you can hear pop music developing, and hear Prince's constant influence. 1982 – The Pointer Sisters keep things fresh for their ninth album with a cover of *I Feel For You* (two years before Chaka's version). 1992 – Arrested Development sample *Alphabet Street* (without consent) on *Tennessee*. 2002 – Beyoncé riffs off *If I Was Your Girlfriend* for her vocal on Jay-Z's '03 *Bonnie And Clyde*. 2012 – Jessie Ware takes the drum loop from *The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker* when she writes her debut single, *Running*. All of which guarantees that in 2022, 2032 and beyond, there'll be big hit records referencing, sampling, riffing – but all audibly inspired – by Prince.

Ian Peel, Editor-At-Large

Ian



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80S



23



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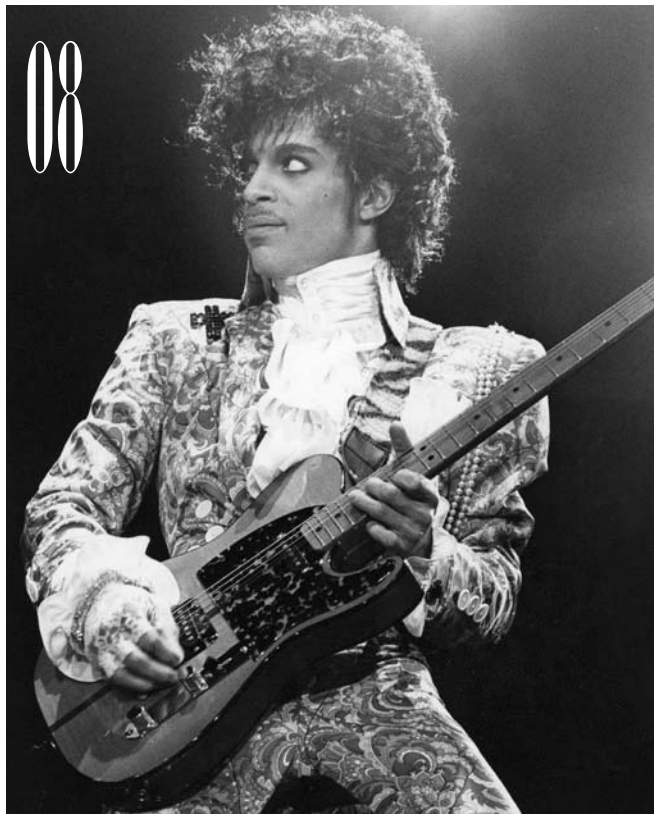
FEATURES

- PRINCE 1958-2016** 08
Yet another musical genius lost to the world in 2016. Prince was more than just a pop star: he was a master songsmith, supplying hits for many others beside himself, an incredible vocalist and musician and – of course – a flamboyant and unique performer...
- DEXYS** 36
Classic Pop takes a pew with Dexys' well-heeled spokesman Kevin Rowland and his comrade Sean Read to discuss their recent change in direction and to mull over the meaning of it all
- GARY BARLOW & FRIENDS** 44
We talk to the Take That man and a handful of the Eighties stars that helped

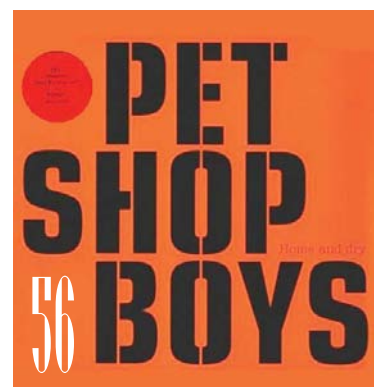
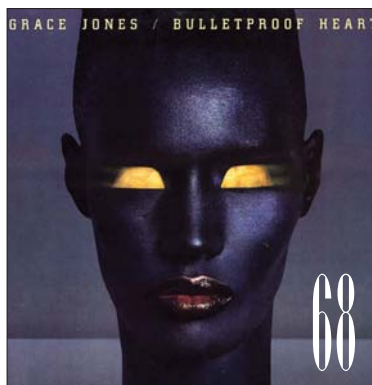
- him create the soundtrack to new film *Eddie The Eagle* – surely one of their strangest undertakings to date...
- JOHN FOXX** 50
The original lead singer for Ultravox and later an electronic music maverick, Foxx found chart success and picked up a cult following with his pioneering techniques. Now, he celebrates the last 20 years with a new compilation. We get the inside story
- POP ART: SCOTT KING** 56
He was art director for *i-D* magazine and *Sleazenation*, he's exhibited his work at the Saatchi gallery and now he's a professor at University of the Arts London, but our interest lies in his powerful sleeve designs for Pet Shop Boys, Morrissey and many more

- BANANARAMA** 60
'Showbiz journalist' Paul Simper has hung out with many of the stars celebrated in these pages. Here is his account of time spent in the city and the country with Bananarama from his new book *Just Got Lucky*
- THE LOWDOWN** 68
A detailed look at the best offerings from Grace Jones' career
- CLASSIC ALBUM** 74
We relive the making of *True Blue*, a love letter to Madonna's new hubby, actor Sean Penn, and her most successful album...
- BEN WATT** 80
With *Everything But The Girl* on near-permanent hiatus, Watt has laid down a sumptuous new solo album

08



44



110



50

NEWS

- POP-UP** 24
Pet Shop Boys open a pop-up shop, ABC revisit a masterpiece, Jean-Michel Jarre gathers the stars, The Go-Go's bid adieu, Annie Lennox is honoured, and Morrissey gets mouthy...
- BURIED TREASURES** 28
The Smiths' colourful German vinyl, a Jean-Michel Jarre box set, a rare Kraftwerk six-track, and The Durutti Column's sandpaper sleeve
- RADAR** 30
Releases on the horizon
- THOMAS DOLBY** 33
The electronic mastermind and university professor discusses his work

- STEVE JANSEN** 35
Ex-Japan drummer on dressing up in South London, Mick Karn, and his new solo LP *Tender Extinction*
- REGULARS**
- TRANSMISSION** 22
Tributes to Prince
- LONG LIVE VINYL** 86
Thompson Twins' red vinyl reissues, Associates' *Sulk* makes a return to wax, plus Prince, Bowie, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Air, Garbage, Bernard Herrmann and more
- COMPETITIONS** 104
Grace Jones' new 4LP *Warm Leatherette* box set, Ali Campbell box sets, Ex-Bucks Fizz OBF albums and five very different Eighties compilations...

REVIEWS

- The best releases and live concerts** 90
- SINGLES** 90
The Blow Monkeys' Dr Robert listens in
- NEW RELEASES** 91
ABC, Marsheaux, Dinner, Starless, Dexys, Steve Jansen, Kristin Kontrol, Katy B...
- REISSUES** 98
Associates, Paul McCartney, Air, The Cars, The Go-Go's, Breathe, Robert Palmer...
- COMPILATIONS** 102
Indie, psychedelia, D.I.Y. and duets!
- BOOKS AND DVDS** 107
Four excellent new publications
- LIVE** 110
A-ha, Gary Barlow, Eddie Reader, The Stranglers, The Real Thing...

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WHO'S WHO

23



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I am stuck in a Seventies/Eighties groove

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WATERCOOLER MOMENTS

*1 "...West coast rapper, heard on the Amazon show *Betas*. Close second: Late Night Tuff Guy, London DJ/remixer known to drop a lovely Balearic breakdown of Toto's *Africa*."

*2 "I can't remember a debut album in a long time whose brilliance was so thoroughly baffling and alienating..."

*3 "...they're the AlunaGeorge/2step fusion of your dreams."

*4 "Power pop from the USA, with electronic flourishes. The Vince Clarke remix of 'I wanna get better' is pure pop perfection."

*5 "...a punchy pop band from Newcastle/Durham with strong songs and fine harmonies. They just finished a UK tour and have been played on Radio 2. Debut album *How Can We Fix This?* is newly released."

*6 "Startling, wildly theatrical prog-folksters fronted by ex-Dexys singer Madeleine Hyland. First album coming out soon..."

*7 "...like Bananarama condensed into two with instruments and soul."



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Hazlewood, the man behind *These Boots Are Made For Walking* – is out now. He's also subtitled German films into English and sung with Morcheeba. This month he takes on our new releases reviews.



Mark Lindores grew up during the golden age of pop mags, devouring such publications as *Smash Hits* and *Number One*. Writing about the artists he used

to read about for *Classic Pop*, *Total Film* and *Mixmag*, he is living the dream of his 15-year-old self. This month he looks back at the remarkable career of Grace Jones for our The Low Down feature.



Paul Lester always wanted to be a music journalist. He became Features Editor of *Melody Maker*, and later Deputy Editor of *Uncut*. Since 2007

he has freelanced for *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *MOJO*, *Classic Rock*, *Prog...* and *Classic Pop*, where this month he meets Dexys, and profiles the irreplaceable Prince.

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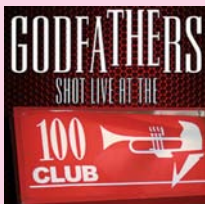
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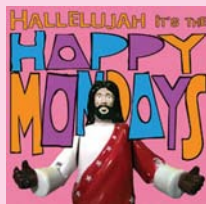
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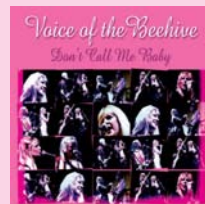
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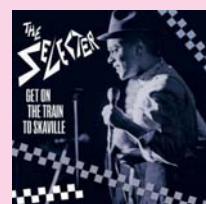
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PRINCE 1958-2016

Hard to believe, but just three months after the death of David Bowie, the world has lost another iconic musician. On April 21, the artist formerly known as The Artist Formerly Known As Prince died, seemingly out of the blue – at the time of going to press, there was speculation that it was due to flu or an accidental drug overdose. Whatever the cause, there's no doubting the giant hole that Prince has left in the fabric of pop.

Aged only 57, Prince was one of the last stars. He was endlessly adventurous, a pop polymath who was as musically experimental as he was glamorously androgynous, with a fluid approach to music-making that matched his gender-bending image. Even in an age of colourful, controversial characters – Adam Ant, Boy George, Holly Johnson, Marc Almond – he stood out, a flamboyant beacon who knew no musical or sexual bounds.

Nor did he recognise racial confines. He was a miscegenist, blurring the borders between black and white, soul and pop, gospel and rock, funk and metal, R&B and psychedelia. His albums were eclectic tours de force, and each one, especially during his golden age, was greeted rapturously by critics while also selling in their millions. Like Bowie in the Seventies, Prince dominated the Eighties, with a sequence of albums – from 1980's *Dirty Mind* to 1990's *Graffiti Bridge* – that matched Bowie's from *Space Oddity* to *Scary Monsters*. Meanwhile, he was a human jukebox, casually issuing classic pop singles, one after the other, with regal ease: 1999, *Little Red Corvette*, *When Doves Cry*, *Let's Go Crazy*, *Purple Rain*, *I Would Die 4 U*, *Raspberry Beret*, *Pop Life*, *Kiss*, *Mountains*, *Sign O' The Times*, *If I Was Your Girlfriend*, *U Got The Look*, *I Could Never Take The Place Of Your Man*, *Alphabet Street*, *Batdance*... Few artists can boast such a brilliant series of hits, that defined the times and took advantage of the latest technology but sound as electrifying today as they did on first release.

At one point in 1984, during his *Purple Rain* reign, Prince had the No. 1 album, film and single in the US, yet he managed to trump his own stellar achievements with the *Around The World In A Day*, *Parade* and *Sign O' The Times* albums. But if he never quite managed to sustain his success in the Nineties and beyond (although Sinéad O'Connor had a worldwide smash with his song *Nothing Compares 2 U*), he remained right until the end one of the greatest live performers on the planet, his concerts feats of endurance and musical and terpsichorean daring – indeed, his last ever shows were on April 14, part of his Piano And A Microphone tour. There was even news that Prince had signed a new deal with Warner Bros after an 18-year gap. That's not to be now, of course, but *Classic Pop* readers can take solace in the trove of fabulous music that he left behind. **Paul Lester**





1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6

Mick Hudson captures Prince at Wembley Arena in 1994. The gold-clad star had recently changed his name to the infamous symbol and here he is pictured playing the customised gold 'symbol' guitar moulded to the shape of his new moniker. Prince's guitar playing was stacked with drama – flamboyant, skilled and super speedy when required. Needless to say, he went through a fair few of these fragile instruments...



1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6

Smoke lingers in the air as Prince poses for a portrait in 1982, the year he released his fifth studio album, *1999*. The album was his first to reach the Top 10 in the Billboard charts and was the fifth best-seller of the following year, racking up multi-platinum status. To many lesser mortals that would be the pinnacle; not for Prince. His most successful LP, *Purple Rain*, the first to feature his band The Revolution, would follow in 1984.

**1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6**

From donning a G-string and high heels for his *Dirty Mind* tour to shiny purple raincoats, Prince was known for his vivid colours and theatrical attire, but this man paid no heed to any style bible and could do demure with the best of them. Here music specialist Virginia Turbett is behind the lens. Check out her extensive archive of pictures taken throughout the Seventies and Eighties — well worth a look (virginiaturbett.com/artists).



1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6

Onstage strumming his Hohner guitar during the *Dirty Mind* tour. Inter-band relationships were tested when Prince chose to play the provocative song *Head* from the album, causing keyboardist Gayle Chapman to quit the band... and the trouble continued post-tour when bassist André Cymone also turned his back on Prince, supposedly amid claims that Prince had mistreated him. The pair eventually resolved their issues.

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1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6

August 21, 1998 and Prince strikes a pose at Le Zénith in Paris, France. Aside from airing most of his big hits, that night's set included a rare performance of *Love Thy Will Be Done*, a song he co-wrote and produced for Martika, and a seven-song piano set that included *Diamonds And Pearls*, *The Most Beautiful Girl In The World*, *Raspberry Beret* and *Nothing Compares 2 U*, a worldwide smash hit for Sinéad O'Connor.



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1 9 5 8 - 2 0 1 6

Prince onstage during the *Purple Rain* tour. This round-the-world jaunt supported his sixth studio album and sold over 1.7 million tickets. It was also the first to feature the sound of backing band The Revolution. Prince assembled vocal trio Apollonia 6, and co-collaborator Sheila E opened on the tour. Prince's set fired off with album opener *Let's Go Crazy*, the first time on tour that he would commence proceedings with a new song.

THE BEAUTIFUL ONE

PAUL LESTER CELEBRATES THE LIFE AND
WORK OF THE SEXUALLY AUDACIOUS,
LASCIVIOUS AND CAPRICIOUS,
OUTLANDISH AND OUTRAGEOUS PRINCE



© Getty Images



At the time of going to press, *Classic Pop* learned from the BBC that, in the wake of his death on April 21, Prince was due to dominate the charts both in the UK – where he was expected to have the No. 1 single and album – and in the US where, by Friday April 22, *The Very Best Of Prince and Purple Rain* were at the No. 1 and No. 2 spots respectively on the Billboard chart. That meant that Prince outsold the rest of the market in just 24 hours. His reign looked set to continue even after his passing.

In death as in life, Prince held sway. In his pomp, between 1980 and 1990, only Madonna and Michael Jackson were in the same commercial superleague, and the diminutive singer, songwriter, performer and producer dwarfed both of those artists in terms of multifaceted abilities and creative achievements. In the same period, Madonna released four albums while Jackson issued two, compared to Prince's 10, two of which were doubles. And, of course, whereas much of the material on Madonna's and Michael's albums were composed by or with a variety of collaborators, Prince's songs were entirely self-penned... and he played all the instruments and produced and arranged every last note on those records. Nothing (and nobody) compared to him.

Prince was the quintessential do-it-all musician. Apparently, while still in his teens, he had learned to play 26 instruments. The credits to his 1978 debut album, *For You*, recorded when he was 19, listed some of the ones that he played: guitars, bass, drums, clavinet, slapsticks, wind chimes, congas, Finga cymbals, Fender Rhodes piano, Poly Moog, syndrums, ARP Pro Soloist and ARP String Ensemble. But it was the wide variety of uses that he put them to that so impressed. Prince was a byword for eclecticism, and his music displayed a dazzling range of styles, from funk, R&B and soul to rock, psychedelia and pop. Like David Bowie, his only serious rival in the

PRINCE WAS A BYWORD FOR ECLECTICISM AND HIS MUSIC DISPLAYED A DAZZLING RANGE OF STYLES

transformation stakes, he changed from album to album (indeed, he often changed from track to track within each album). The Prince of *For You* is quite a different proposition to the Prince of 1980's *Dirty Mind* which is itself completely different to 1982's *1999*, and so on. *Purple Rain* (1984), *Around The World In A Day* (1985), *Parade* (1986) and *Sign O' The Times* (1987), from his imperial phase, each showed him making abrupt stylistic twists and turns and evincing a desire to not repeat himself. Likewise, although singles such as *1999*, *When Doves Cry*, *If I Was Your Girlfriend*, *Pop Life*, *Raspberry Beret*, *Kiss*, *Alphabet Street*, *I Could Never Take The Place Of Your Man* and *Little Red Corvette* are all instantly recognisable as the work of Prince, each one is sufficiently unique that it almost merits its own new genre appellation.

If his music was fluid, so too was his persona, which was doe-eyed yet deviant, highly sexualised yet coquettish, soft and feminine yet with a powerful energy that was distinctly male. He was simultaneously transgressive and a traditionalist, drawing for his funkadelic pop on the past triumphs of James Brown, Todd Rundgren, Sly Stone, Earth Wind & Fire, Parliament-Funkadelic, Miles Davis and Jimi Hendrix. His album sleeves were teasingly androgynous, from the bare-chested, bouffant-haired wonderkind of the eponymous debut LP and the black and white character in scarf and women's briefs on the front of *Dirty Mind* to the preening, pompadoured superfreak straddling a chopper on the cover of *Purple Rain*. "I'm not a woman, I'm not a man/ I am something that you'll never understand," as he sang on *I Would Die 4 U*, confirming his refusal to be bound by any kind of social or sexual convention.







Getty Images

PRINCE WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST PERFORMERS TO SASHAY, STRUT, PREEN AND PIROUETTE ACROSS A STAGE

He had too much individual, idiosyncratic style to ever be fashionable; instead he set new fantastical standards for pop performers intent on proving their maverick flamboyance. He had a voice that could go from a growl to a falsetto shriek, often within a few bars. He was so prolific and generous with his gifts that he gave away songs that he could easily have charted with himself – *Manic Monday* for The Bangles, *The Glamorous Life* for Sheila E – while covers of his tunes became defining statements for a whole slew of artists: Chaka Khan's version of *I Feel For You*, say, or Sinéad O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2 U*.

Prince added 'film star' to his CV with *Purple Rain* but really he was the victim, in this realm, of his all-consuming presence. He appeared to play himself, or at least a version of himself, just as Bowie did when he assumed the role of the thin, pale, enigmatic extraterrestrial in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*. Thereafter, he couldn't really step outside of himself to realistically portray anybody else, and his movie career subsequently faltered.

Really, though, he didn't need to act, because the pint-sized artist could bring his larger-than-life charisma to bear on the world's stages. He sold over 100 million records but even when the hits dried up – his last substantial chart entry was 1994's *The Most Beautiful Girl In The World* – nobody doubted, right up till the end, that he was one of the greatest performers ever to sashay or strut, preen and pirouette across a stage. It's a measure of his preeminence as a live musician that, in a list of best performances at iconic sports event The Super Bowl's annual halftime show, Prince was voted top, ahead of U2, The Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Beyoncé and Paul McCartney. Even the combined forces of Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson circa "Nipplegate" couldn't rival the purple one for funkasmic swagger.

Prince's wilfulness and artistic obduracy will have had their downsides if you happened to have been employees of his record companies over the years. They might have liked him to have done more than the mere handful of interviews he gave over the years (there's another strange

contradiction about Prince: he was simultaneously an exhibitionist and a shy introvert). They would probably have preferred him to have stemmed the unstoppable flow of releases that meant that he put out literally dozens of albums – 39 at last count, if you include his two internet-only releases – with probably several times that many's worth of unreleased songs currently languishing in the vaults at Paisley Park HQ. They might also have been happier had he not scrawled "Slave" on his face, so publicly biting the hand that sought to feed him.

But for Prince acolytes who didn't have to concern themselves with balancing the books, meeting promotional needs and maximising chart potential, they could simply revel in his mystique and glory in his disdain for the press – despite being, or perhaps because he was, the most critically adored musician of his time. Music journalists loved Prince's challenging, slyly combative approach, for its sheer entertainment value, and because it highlighted his total disregard for the rules of media engagement.

Still, for all of that, it would be wrong to suggest that Prince is owed a debt by the *Classic Pop* generation. By the time he'd made an impact on the UK consciousness – and the golden age of Eighties pop was a decidedly British affair – the new romantic/synthpop/new pop/white funk/call-it-what-you-will generation was up and running. ABC, The Human League, Culture Club, Spandau Ballet, Duran Duran et al – they all would have happened without Prince. That's a matter of simple chronology. But if you're looking for an American who summed up the era's ideals, who offered a compact version of all the colour, flamboyance, strangeness and stylistic abandon then exploding across Blighty, then Prince was your man/woman/polymorphously exotic creature from the other side of the world. What makes Prince really special is that he captured that period brilliantly, but also transcended it effortlessly. ■

TRANSMISSION

WWW.CLASSICPOP.MAG.COM

AS THE WORLD RECOILS FROM THE PASSING OF PRINCE, WE DEDICATE OUR LETTERS PAGE TO TRIBUTES FROM HIS MUSICAL COLLABORATORS PAST AND PRESENT: SHEILA E., SHEENA EASTON, KYLIE MINOGUE, AND 3RDEYEGIRL'S IDA NIELSEN

Email ian.peel@anthem-publishing.com



/ClassicPopMag



@ClassicPop Magazine



@classic popmag

A DREAM COME TRUE

My musical crush since my teenage years. I met Prince after his concert at London's Earls Court in 1992. I said I would love to work with him and he said, come visit the studio. He asked me where my lyrics were and where would I like my mic set up. Joking with me. I did end up giving him lyrics for a song called *Baby Doll*. His driver delivered a cassette to me later that night. It was a demo of Prince singing and playing the song *Baby Doll* he had written using the lyrics. We never recorded it properly. I then had the privilege of visiting Paisley Park. It was a dream come true. Thank you for the music and memories.

KYLIE MINOGUE

LOVE, MUSIC AND LIGHT

It is impossible to sum up in a few neat phrases what his loss means to all of us. Prince has been described as iconic, innovative, controversial, unique, charismatic and one of the driving forces of music for the last four decades. He was all of those things, but he was also warm and generous, gentle and kind and when he chose you as his friend, you were blessed.

Generous with his ideas and talent, he often wrote songs specifically for people whose work he admired. He was brimming with music he wanted to share with the world and so many artists and musicians have benefited from his vision. I cherish all the times we spent together making music and memories that will forever be woven into the fabric of my career, and my life.

I can't imagine Prince not being here. His energy was so strong that he never seemed to age or tire like the rest of us. He was one of those people who confirmed my belief that we are more than just biology. We are spirit. He was,

and is, the epitome of a soul that came to us overflowing with love, and music, and light. So take time today to listen to some of your favourite Prince songs. Be grateful, as I am that we are a part of the generation that got to experience the genius of this wonderful being who never was anything but exceptional.

SHEENA EASTON

A SPECIAL FREQUENCY

The earth made a hiccup and left us all a little bit poorer. I don't know how to begin to describe the magnitude of this loss. An icon, a legend and a genius without compare is now gone. A man who loved, lived and WAS music, a deeply caring man with tremendous generosity and a great concern for the injustice on this earth.

A beautiful soul and a man who wanted to make the world a better place – who gathered people of all ethnicities and nationalities with his message of love. It has been such an honor and privilege to have been close to this greatness and I will forever cherish the moments we shared. I have lost a dear friend, a mentor, a big brother, ping pong buddy, a teacher, a laughing partner and caretaker, and my number one musical influence and inspiration! We all have lost the personification of music and love – and a special frequency is now missing here on earth.

Prince, I love you and will miss you deeply and with me millions of people around this planet. You made my biggest dream come true and I will always carry you with me in my heart. Your beautiful spirit and your music will shine on and outlive us all. I am so thankful to have had you in my life and I will move on in honor of your genius legacy. With my deepest love – always.

IDA NIELSEN

A VISIONARY, A DREAMER

When death comes too early, chaos reigns in its wake. During times like these we must rise above the dusk and sorrow and seek a higher plane where peace, love, joy and celebration overcomes the emptiness, and shines a light upon the darkness. With the passing of Prince, my friend, my knight, and my everlasting ally, I search for words and ways to make sense of the senselessness that this reality presents to us. How do we mourn? How do we express? How do we accept such a deep loss to our musical past, present, and future? As we will someday begin the process of acceptance and overcome the fear of letting go, what can we take with us to remind us of the light that shines so bright among us?

Gratefully, this path has already been blazed for us, in Platinum and Gold. It is a path that is broad and welcoming, that transcends race, politics, age, orientation, gender, genre and other limitations that we place on our thinking. It is a path of joy, and sorrow, Diamonds and Pearls. It touches upon every emotion we are blessed to Experience. It is a path of melody and mirth. Of angst and anger. Of conflict and resolution, sometimes through a call of Revolution.

It's not my effort to be clever, or even creative, in the above paragraph. It is only meant to share my sorrow, and my solace, in the music which we all love, and loved Prince for creating. Prince was a Visionary. A Dreamer and a Believer. But most of all, he believed in those whom his music touched. To watch him perform was, as he encouraged, "to see the dawn." There was a newness, a freshness, a coolness that seemed to exude from his every pore.

I've been asked, "What was it like to create and perform music with Prince?" My rebuttal was usually "Ask him what it was like to create and perform with me." It's an answer that he would understand because it comes from the boldness that he played a part of instilling in me.

The truth is, each time was different, constantly evolving. To describe one experience as an example would only serve to reduce the significance of the others. And as Prince would say, "That ain't cool." And that is the essence of Prince and the legacy of the music he leaves for us to enjoy. His music is different, each time, in the most magical of ways. I close wishing each of you Peace, Love, and Joy in your celebration of Prince's life. Through his music he achieved the eternal. Through your love and support of him; past, present and future, he will remain our Prince. May your heart shine shades of Purple, 4ever. I know mine will.

SHEILA E.

TWEET IT!

 **@PaulYoungParlez**

So that's it then: the last true star for me. We won't see another genius like him

 **@rolandtff**

I've got a bad feeling about this #Prince #Bowie It's like God is calling back his angels before all hell breaks loose on Earth #Trump

 **@ChakaKhan**

I LOVED him, the world LOVED him. Now he's at peace with his Father. Rest in power, @prince, my brother.

 **@TheHollyJohnson**

What a brilliant singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist: a beautiful purple star in the musical firmament

 **@BoyGeorge**

Some artists are so big they can break the rules, which begs the question – are there actually rules?

 **@ABCFRY**

Nothing but tears on tears. Prince is was and always one of the greatest. A true innovator and totally fearless

 **@JLo**

Shocked and soooo sad!! #RIP PRINCE #music #legend #gonetoo soon

 **@katyperry**

And just like that... the world lost a lot of magic. Rest in peace Prince! Thanks for giving us so much...

 **@elliegoulding**

RIP Prince. There will never be anyone else like you.

 **@ThomasDolby**

Waiting for my lunch in a takeout, they played in sequence Prince, Bowie, Michael, Marvin. Now my day is lapsing into deep melancholy.

 **@Lloyd_Cole**

Prince crammed more into those 57 years than any musician I can think of. His idea of fun – another gig!

 **@belindaofficial**

I'm heartbroken that Prince is gone. Devastated... can't process this.

 **@MIAuniverse**

RIP PRINCE> chosen colour PURPLE. purple is achieved through mixing colours #imforallpeople

FACE TO FACEBOOK



That time Prince was your rhythm guitarist then sent you the picture. The time Prince was so gracious to come to your club in the hood of South Dallas and play for four hours into the night. The time you recorded *Today, The Earth Song* at Paisley Park. All the times y'all shot pool and argued over religion. The time Prince got in your limo to tell you that *World Wide Underground* wasn't finished yet and you "felt a way". Lol...

The time Prince "evolved" and wouldn't sign yo mama's *Dirty Mind* cover 'cause he said he wasn't into that no mo and yo mama told him "Well you shouldn't have made it then" and you were embarrassed. The time Prince had a "swear jar" and you just put a 20 dollar bill in it when you walk in. The time Prince and Larry Graham had you cornered in a Jehovah's Witness... well, witness session. The time you presented Prince with the ICON Billboard Award with 20 (Janelle Monáe)...

The time you sang *I Wanna Be Your Lover* on the 3rd grade talent show wearing a swim top and the teachers cut you short because it was "inappropriate". The moment you remember how much he means to you... You've been here all my life. And you will live FOREVER in my cells. Sometimes it snows in April? ERYKAH BADU



Sad loss to the music world. Such a talented man. NEIL ANTHONY



It was *Raspberry Beret*. I was four years old. Yes, four. I remember that I instantly loved it. "Mommy, who is that singing?" Seems weird but it's true. More than a "once in a lifetime" artist... a ONCE IN FOREVER ARTIST. I'm still in shock and I feel this overwhelming grief. But we should all turn away from that and HONOR this musician that changed all of our lives, our perspectives, our feeling, our whole being. From another planet? Probably. Royalty, for sure. Us worthy...? Laughable...

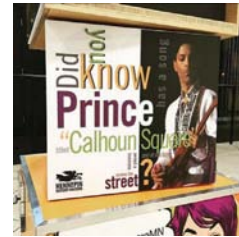
They say don't meet your idols... they let you down. But, some of my greatest, funniest (yes, he was hilarious), and most prolific encounters and conversations about music came from the moments that I spent with him. It would be silly to say that he has inspired our music... it's beyond that. He's somewhere within every song I've ever written. I will smile when I think of every second that I had the fortune of being in his company. We have lost our greatest living musician. But his music will never die. Prince, NOTHING COMPARES... JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

INSTAGRAM

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@paul_theysgens
Rest in peace #prince
#music #purplerain



@magnetdude
#CalhounSquare
"Meet Me There, If You Dare" #Uptown
#Minneapolis



@carlamisty
Nice tribute in Liverpool. #prince
#streetart #purplerain
#liverpool



@bluecatlz
#Prince #purplerain
#princetribute
#streetart #urbanart
#streetnyc #urbannyc
#SOHO #Manhattan



@djhivolume
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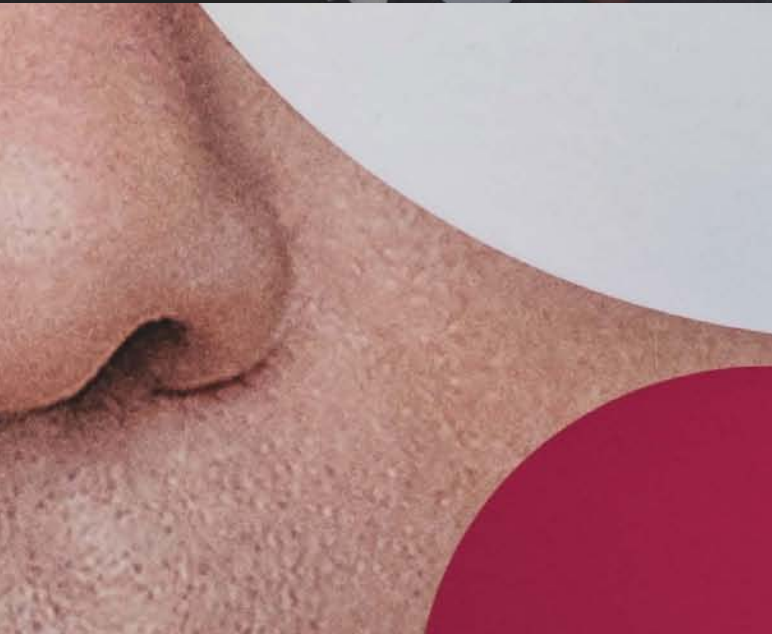
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Still A Hard One To Accept #RipPrince



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#RipPrince

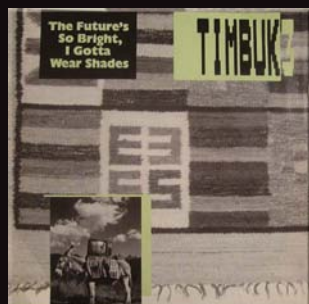
POP





West End Shopkeepers

When Pet Shop Boys became real shopkeepers for a day and opened a pop-up store in London's Boxpark Shoreditch to launch their latest album, *Super*, there were queues around the block. The store opened its doors at 10am on 1st April, selling exclusive signed merchandise and letting shoppers experience the album in full via listening posts. PSB fan excitement harked back to their early hits, and the duo do get nostalgic recalling those old classic pop days. "I miss going to the San Remo pop festival when Paul Weller and Bananarama and everyone would be there... great days," Chris Lowe said. "You felt you were all in it together. It's a shame we're no longer part of that." One thing they're glad to avoid, though, is the whole social media fascination: "That sort of direct contact is stifling, I think," Lowe added. "It takes something away. You end up checking Twitter before you go to bed. It's claustrophobic."



No.23 THE FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT, I GOTTA WEAR SHADES

TIMBUK3

Husband and wife duo Timbuk3's 1986 debut single *The Future's So Bright...* is something of a pop anomaly (with an equally oddball part-animated video). What right did a twanging Fifties styled rock'n'roll tune – that had more in common with Link Wray than any of the synthpop that surrounded it – have to (almost) claw its way into the Top 20? Chris Spedding's 1976 hit *Motorbikin* took a similar tack... With such sync-able lyrics, the track was liberally utilised on the big screen to accompany upbeat scenes in several films, amongst them *Something Wild*, *My Best Friend's A Vampire*, *Kuffs*, *Dream A Little Dream* and *Tommy Boy*. While most producers obviously saw it as a natural choice for the classic motivational montage, songwriter and singer Pat MacDonald was wondering why they'd chosen his song at all. According to Pat, it's his protagonist, a young nuclear scientist, that has the bright future, with the inevitability of the decade ending with a nuclear holocaust as an – almost too oblique – background theme. The pair stuck it to the man when they refused several lucrative ad offers from AT&T, Ford, the US Army and, you guessed it, Ray-Ban sunglasses. Rik Flynn

POP UP



Lexicon's encore

ABC have recorded a follow-up to the classic *The Lexicon Of Love*, with sumptuous orchestration by original string arranger Anne Dudley. Due out on 27 May, *The Lexicon Of Love II* was conceived as a thank you to those who consider the original the archetypal pop record. "Performing the first album live at the Royal Albert Hall was a magical night," Martin Fry tells *Classic Pop*. "I looked out into the audience and thought our fans have waited a long time for a sequel and it would be nice to reexamine those themes as an older man, looking at love after years of experience. We wanted sentimental songs for new romantics and old romantics. I hadn't written for while but I worked with Gary Stephenson, and I wrote a few lyrics with Rob Fusari. I figured there's still magic there to go back to. It's a whole new chapter."

WARHOL'S MISFITS

One of the last bands pop art icon Andy Warhol fell in love with was Curiosity Killed The Cat – and singer Ben Volpelieri-Pierrot has recalled the time he shot their *Misfits* video. "We had an amazing week in New York with him. It was really low-budget, very organic and underplayed." Warhol also interviewed the band for his *Famous For 15 Minutes* TV show: "He made some naughty comments," Ben laughs. "It was very unexpected!"



Classic Glasto

Emily Eavis appears to have taken a leaf out of the REWIND handbook for this year's Glastonbury line-up. Joining Adele, Muse and Coldplay will be Cyndi Lauper, New Order, Madness, St Etienne and Earth, Wind & Fire. Art Garfunkel, ELO, ZZ Top, James Blake, Roisin Murphy, LCD Soundsystem and, it's rumoured, Barry Gibb will also perform at Worthy Farm over the weekend of 22-26th June.



Jarre's All-star Electronica

Jean-Michel Jarre has created an electronic supergroup for his next album. The French Godfather of Electronic Music releases *Electronica Vol. 2: The Heart of Noise* on 6th May featuring Rone, Pet Shop Boys, Primal Scream, E.S., Julia Holter, Gary Numan, Jeff Mills, Peaches, Siriusmo, Yello, The Orb, Sebastien Tellier, Hans Zimmer, Cyndi Lauper and Christophe. To celebrate, Jarre will be hitting the road for the first time in six years and he's promising another typically cutting-edge spectacle. The Electronica tour first touches the UK at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire on July 23 and then returns for seven UK and Irish arena shows in October.

RICKROLLING AT 50

It's been 10 years since he recorded new songs, but Rick Astley has found the perfect antidote for dealing with a midlife crisis – write an album about it. "I got back in the studio and friends were telling me the material was pretty good, so I decided to go for it," he says. "It's a new chapter in my journey as an artist, and a return to the music I first fell in love with." The album, *50*, is due out on 17th June. It follows his sold-out UK tour and is preceded by the single *Keep Singing*.



SIMON LE BON'S NOTORIOUS CAPSIZE

The Duran star has been reflecting on the day his yacht *Drum* famously capsized off the Cornish coast in 1985. "It's the most dangerous situation I've ever been in," says Le Bon, who ended up trapped beneath the vessel, smelling diesel fumes. "I looked into the eyes of death. It wasn't completely black but it was wet, and everything was upside down, you're walking on the ceiling." Le Bon was led to safety by a diver. "As I came up the waistband of my long johns got caught and I stopped 2ft away from the surface. If I had breathed, it would be the end of me. I managed to get them off my feet and came up with a big smile." Even so, Le Bon and the rescue team could see the funny side. "I got winched off into the helicopter and one of the guys called 'Hey Simon, where's your pants?' I was just stood there in my knickers. There's me, a rock star, in his underpants..."



Live To Spend

Madonna is officially the most successful touring solo artist of all time. The star's recent Rebel Heart tour pushed her total career ticket sales to \$1.73 billion, just ahead of Bruce Springsteen's \$1.25 billion. The news comes as a welcome respite for Madonna, who has been embroiled in a courtroom tug-of-war over the custody of her son Rocco with ex-husband Guy Richie. She

was also given a ticking off for posting fake 'No Parking' signs around her property in New York this year for her fleet of SUVs.

Two Australian dates from Madonna's Rebel Heart tour were filed for a DVD release. It's also expected to feature elements of her Tears Of A Clown fan show in Melbourne, which mixed rarities with stand-up comedy and circus performance.

POP QUIZ

1 Swing Out Sister had a hit with *Breakout*, but which 1987 album was the track taken from?

2 Which 1984 film soundtrack – nominated for a Razzie award for Worst Musical Score – did Harold Faltermeyer and Giorgio Moroder both contribute to?

3 What is the name of Curiosity Killed The Cat's lead singer?

4 Who had a hit single with 99 Luft Ballons (99 Red Balloons in the UK)?

5 Before forming The Mission, Wayne Hussey left his position as guitarist in which band before his stint in The Sister Of Mercy?

6 *Fire In Cairo* featured first on which of The Cure's albums?

7 What is the name of Abba's debut album?

8 Terri Nunn was the lead singer in which group?

9 Which current band released a mini album entitled *Coming On Strong* in 2004?

10 Which female artist first found fame with the single *Vision Of Love*?

11 Who produced Donna Summer's eponymous debut album, released in 1982?

12 Rick Astley took his 1987 hit *Never Gonna Give You Up* to No. 1 in how many countries?

13 *Beauty And The Beat* was the debut album by which girl band?

14 What was the first UK No. 1 single of the Eighties?

15 Corsican Henry Padovani was the original guitarist in which UK band?

HOW DID YOU DO?

13-15 The Winner Takes It All

10-12 I Should Have Known Better

6-9 I Feel For You

0-5 Give It Up



BURIED TREASURES

Rooting around those boxes of junk in your loft may turn up more than you hoped for. While many vinyl releases from the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties are worth next to nothing – nostalgic value aside, of course – some could land you a small fortune, should you choose to part with them. Here, we take four rare artefacts to the experts at 991.com and ask them for a valuation. Browse their online store at www.991.com... and get **15% off using voucher code CP150115**.

THE SMITHS

THE SMITHS

German multicoloured vinyl promotional-only version of the band's debut LP, released in 1984. Individually numbered on the label, this being number 150 of just 500 copies – every pressing was unique. Issued in a standard German picture sleeve.

MINT COPIES MIGHT FETCH OVER £600



KRAFTWERK

RALF AND FLORIAN

1973 German six-track blue & silver Philips label pressing of the band's third album (never officially reissued on CD), housed in the original fully laminated picture sleeve complete with the rare fold-out 48" x 48" comic poster by Emil Schult.

MINT COPIES ARE FETCHING OVER £200



JEAN-MICHEL JARRE

THE COMPLETE WORKS

1993 French-only limited edition digitally remastered 10 x CD box set including every album from *Oxygene* to *Cousteau*, all housed inside an amazing 11" x 8" x 7" flip-top deluxe picture box; all discs come with gold artwork, in custom white trays.

MINT COPIES ARE FETCHING OVER £500



THE DURUTTI COLUMN

THE RETURN OF...

Limited 1980 UK Factory Records nine-track LP in a handmade sandpaper sleeve, assembled by members of Joy Division, A Certain Ratio and others on the Factory roster – FACT14. Mint, with sharp sandpaper, this is fetching over £100.

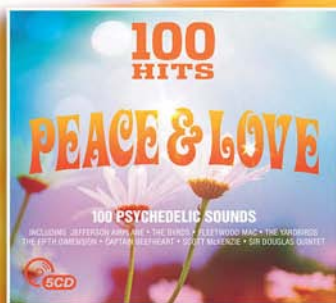
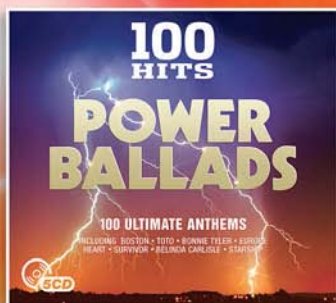
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ANSWERS 1) It's Better To Travel 2) Thief Of Hearts 3) Ben Volpelle-Pierrot 4) Nena 5) Dead Or Alive 6) Three Imaginary Boys 7) Ring Ring 8) Berlin 9) Hot Chip 10) Mariah Carey 11) Quincy Jones 12) 25 13) The Go-Go's 14) Brass In Pocket – The Pretenders 15) The Police

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ON THE RADAR

THE RELEASES TO
LOOK OUT FOR IN
THE NEXT COUPLE
OF MONTHS...

LAURA MVULA

The Dreaming Room
New album 20/5/16

D.A.R.K.

Science Agrees
New album 27/5/16

PET SHOP BOYS

The Pop Kids
White vinyl 12" 27/5/16

ABC

The Lexicon Of Love II
New album 27/5/16

THE BLOW MONKEYS

*The Best Of The Blow
Monkeys*
Compilation 3/6/16

LADYHAWKE

Wild Things
New album 3/6/16

TEGAN AND SARA

Love You To Death
New album 3/6/16

GARBAGE

Strange Little Birds
New album 3/6/16

PAUL SIMON

Stranger To Stranger
New album 3/6/16

PAUL MCCARTNEY

Pure
Compilation 10/6/16

PETER, BJORN AND JOHN

Breakin' Point
New album 10/6/16

BAT FOR LASHES

The Bride
New album 1/7/2016



The Go-Gones

A power popsters The Go-Go's are embarking on a US farewell tour. Formed in 1978, the quartet of Belinda Carlisle, Jane Wiedlin, Charlotte Caffey and Gina Schock will play 18 shows in August to say 'bye bye' to their fans. "After a 38-year run, we are gearing up for one last blast of a summer tour," the band say. "We feel so lucky and so grateful to have had the incredible support of our fans for so long. We can't wait to get out on the road and give the people what they want: some loud, fast music and a great party!" Guitarist Wiedlin adds, "It is with mixed feelings that we embark on our last adventure together. What an incredible ride we have had. I hope you will continue to follow all of us on our future endeavours." The last ever Go-Go's show is at The Greek Theatre in LA on 30th August.

FIZZ UP

This year marks the 35th anniversary of Bucks Fizz's 1981 Eurovision victory with *Making Your Mind Up*. Now, former members Cheryl Baker, Mike Nolan, Jay Atson and Bobby McVay have announced news of the vinyl release of their LP *OBF – Fame & Fortune*. It's a gatefold edition which includes both a CD and vinyl of the album, photos and personal messages from the army of fans who helped assure the foursome an impressive three No. 1 singles in the Eighties, over 15 million album sales in total and an Ivor Novello – not bad going. The vinyl edition is out now, and the band are on the road for their Make Believe UK tour.



Carpenter's live Thing

Movie director/soundtrack legend John Carpenter is gearing up for his first-ever live shows. He plays Spain's Primavera Sound festival on 2nd June and arrives in the UK for two shows at Manchester's Albert Hall (28-29 October) followed by London's Troxy on – you guessed it! – Halloween, 31 October. The dates accompany Carpenter's latest release, a sequel to *Lost Themes: Lost Themes II*, featuring Cody Carpenter (John's son) and Daniel Davies (his godson). This live trio recently also composed and recorded the title theme for the CBS drama *Zoo*, and Daniel scored the feature film *Condemned*.



MAGNE'S TRAIN OF THOUGHT

A-ha may be back together but not all three members are on the same page. It was Magne Furuholmen who pulled the plug on the band in 2010, and he says their latest comeback "wasn't my decision". The 54 year-old admits, "The other two wanted to do it, and I had to decide: do I block it, let them do it without me, or make a fool of myself with my statements about this being the end?" However, quiet discord has been the key to A-ha's success over the years. "As a band we have brought internal conflicts out in the open more than most," he muses. At least their current tour isn't 'farewell': "We've done that already so it would be shameful to do it again. Everyone's got a sense of freedom at the end of it, not knowing what's going to happen next."



Jacko's debts Beat It

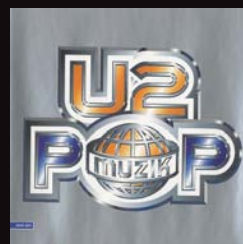
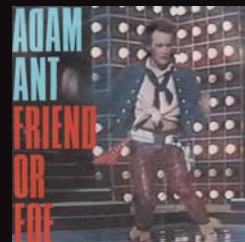
Michael Jackson's debts have been wiped clean after his estate agreed to sell its remaining stake in a lucrative music catalogue to Sony Corp. The late singer's half-share of the Sony/ATV Music Publishing catalogue, which includes works by The Beatles and Bob Dylan, was sold for \$750 million earlier this year. Jackson's estate, which benefits his children and mother, still own the rights to his master recordings and songs that he wrote along with a stake in EMI Publishing, Inc. But Jackson's legal woes aren't over yet: former manager Thome Thome claims he's still owed a share of gross receipts and a finder's fee for a Neverland Ranch bank loan. The legal matter has been running since 2012.



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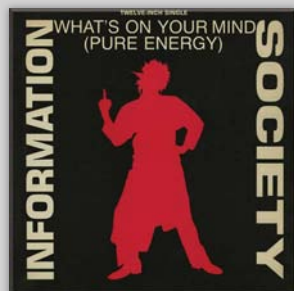
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(PURE ENERGY)**

INFORMATION SOCIETY

A fluoro-colour video – very much of-its-time – accompanies this solid, if ephemeral, offering from Minneapolis outfit InSoc. Lead man, songwriter and arty extrovert Kurt Larson resembles a PIL-era John Lydon with his 'crazed conductor' look, his lop-sided hair-do and those wild-armed gesticulations as he dances to a cool repeto-synth intro (cut with a sample of Leonard Nimoy as Spock saying 'pure energy'), before another synth hook arpeggiates in (clearly influenced by Nu Shooz' *I Can't Wait*, released a few years earlier). 'Energy' is unquestionably the word. Kurt sings up a storm too – a Simon Le Bon-esque Jekyl in the chorus, a Phil Oakey-esque Hyde for the verse. It's all rather addictive. Little wonder it remained in the US chart for 25 weeks, peaking at No. 3. For some reason, we Brits were less impressed; it inched in at a less-than-deserved No. 81. This tune also plays in the nightclub scene in *American Psycho* as a straight-faced Patrick Bateman tells a female clubber he's into 'Murders and executions, mostly'. InSoc are still around and follow up 2014's *Hello World* with new LP *Orders Of Magnitude* through PledgeMusic. You can still catch them live, too. Rik Flynn



The Miracle of Annie

Earlier this year Eurythmics star Annie Lennox was awarded the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's Livingstone Medal in recognition of 'outstanding public service' on HIV/AIDS. "I'm truly honoured," said Lennox, who follows in the footsteps of past recipients David Attenborough and Neil Armstrong. "There have been numerous social and medical transformations since David Livingstone's lifetime, yet there is still so much more to do before we can see the end of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has ravaged the lives of millions of men, women and children across every region of sub-Saharan Africa. My contribution has been small, but my dream would be to see the end of AIDS in the not too distant future." Mike Robinson of RSGS added, "Our medal nomination process is open to the public but it is unusual to see a name put forward as often as Annie Lennox's."

PAUL COMES BACK AND STAYS

Paul Young is back with his first solo album in 20 years, though *Good Thing* – a collection of soul covers – is the brainchild of hip hop and electronica legend Arthur Baker. "My heart beats for this kind of album. I was a big fan of all these songs when they came out for the first time," says Baker. Paul Young adds: "We've tried to choose not just the obvious songs, but good songs that were under the radar. I think that's something I've always done – less well-known artists, to get singers with incredible voices like Johnnie Taylor, but also songs that perhaps didn't reach the Top 20, but have a high quality. This is what makes the album – to get them out of the woodwork."



Mozzer attacks pop

Morrissey has gone on the attack again via his true-to-you.net blog. He wrote, "It's difficult for me to live in this electronic age of atrocity. We are fed nothing but carnage and ruin... is it any wonder we all look slightly terrorised? Even to have imagination suddenly seems hopeless because pop music has become so impoverished and obsessed only with very, very stupid people." The BBC also took a battering: "Radio One once interviewed William Burroughs! These days they would pass on him in favour of Little Boots. It's a bit like trying to deal with people who have nothing but want even less than they have."



GODFATHERS of POP

— T H O M A S D O L B Y —

Before he emerged as a pioneering figure in the Eighties with *The Golden Age Of Wireless* and his best-known hit *She Blinded Me With Science*, Thomas Dolby wrote Lene Lovich's single *New Toy*, appeared on Thompson Twins' *Set* album and played synth on Foreigner's *Waiting For A Girl Like You*. Dolby has also worked as a technology entrepreneur in Silicon Valley and as MD for the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Conference. His last album was 2011's *A Map Of The Floating City*. He is currently a Professor of the Arts at John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

What was your sonic design for *The Golden Age Of Wireless*?

I wanted to make electronics sound more lush and symphonic, while retaining the songwriting craft of pre-electronic artists.

Was being a star part of the plan?

I wanted my music to have global and substantial success, but not because I aspired to the pop star lifestyle. I felt like I was in a fishbowl.

Did success affect you as an artist?

It presented a conundrum – whether to try to repeat the 'formula', or to continue pioneering new directions. The music industry assumed the former, but in the end I had no option. The impulse was too strong to keep exploring new territory.

Is it true that *She Blinded Me With Science* was slated to be the theme song for *The Big Bang Theory*?

It was used in the pilot. I think they decided the title contradicted Penny's role in the series, as a foil for the nerdy guys. In a way I'm glad it wasn't chosen. OK, it would have made me extremely rich, but I would have been consigned to the 'one-hit wonder' bin along with The Rembrandts [of the *Friends* theme].



Your image then was very 'mad professor'... was that in keeping with your approach to music?

Well, my father and his father and his father were Oxbridge professors, and I've become one myself, so that part is very authentic! As for 'mad'? Hmm. I may be eccentric, but I'm perfectly sane.

You've worked with George Clinton, Eddie Van Halen, Def Leppard, Mark Knopfler...

I chartered a fishing boat out of Miami with George Clinton and listened to his story about an alien encounter in the Bermuda Triangle with Bootsy Collins. I think psychedelic substances and marine bioluminescence had a lot to do with it. With Def Leppard, I was more a piece of outboard equipment for Mutt Lange's convenience. He had me copy their guitar and drum parts by programming and playing electronic doppelgangers. Eddie Van Halen didn't think *This Is Spinal Tap* was funny. He said it was like someone followed him around with a camera for a day, put it up on a screen

and everybody fell about laughing! What makes a successful collaboration? A willingness to leave one's own sense of self behind, and be loose and vulnerable enough to meld minds with a stranger in order to generate something brand new!

How has electronic music evolved since the Eighties?

It's become a lot less rarefied. Most people have had a go with Garageband, or a 99p app on their smartphone. DJs are often as valued as composers and producers. This is good and bad, but all inevitable. All eras of art and music have an arc to them. There are interesting new things, like flexible software synthesisers with limitless possibilities for programming and hacking. I'm happy to relinquish my seat at the table to someone – or tens of thousands of people – with more youth and patience.

Five albums in 30 years – why do you record so sporadically?

I don't have a chemical need to spit out songs, unlike say Paddy McAloon, who writes at least one per week. I'm often busy with other projects, and when my mind is elsewhere I'm not really writing. Plus, my method is to focus on the outlet and work backwards from there. For example, a Radio 2 DJ announcing my latest release, or an upcoming performance. I visualise an empty spotlight, or imagine the 'thunk' as the needle drops in the groove at the start of an LP. What's the next thing we hear?

You played with Bowie at Live Aid. What are your memories?

He exceeded all my expectations, and was inspiring on a very visceral level. If there's such a thing as an angel, he was one. Except for the 10 minutes it took to fly from Battersea heliport to Wembley Stadium – he was the 'cracked actor', strung out in the back of his stretch limo like a fly in a carton of milk. **David Burke**

Video Tech

AS DEXYS TRY FOLK, HERE'S THREE MORE ARTISTS WHO CHANGED TACK...



IGGY POP

FROM BLUES TO PUNK ROCK

Prior to going topless, strutting out his unique brand of punk and becoming the inimitable Iggy Pop, James Osterberg was drummer for The Prime Movers, a blues band based in Michigan...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhXTX7qZUAY



ALANIS MORISSETTE

FROM BUBBLEGUM POP TO ALT-ROCK

She sold millions with angst-filled alt-rock album *Jagged Little Pill*, but here Alanis is singing the Madonna-esque *Too Hot*, complete with dance routines and funk guitars...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar7afdfBHj4



CYNDI LAUPER

FROM POP TO COUNTRY

Once-undisputed Princess of Pop Cyndi Lauper recently turned her attention to country and western for new album *Detour*. Here she performs some hillbilly-infused fare on the Emmy-nominated online series *Skyville Live*.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=phmY36gzDo0



PRETTY ON TAPE

She's best known as the Eighties movie sweetheart from *Pretty In Pink* and *The Breakfast Club* but these days Molly Ringwald is a pop princess too. The actress recorded her first album at the age of six but didn't follow it up until 2013; now she has been working on a series of lives shows in the US which inspired more material. Ringwald says, "When I met Peter Smith, my arranger and pianist, it all came together. We did a week-long stint at Birdland in New York, and recorded a live album. It happens naturally. We get to a new place, we realise we've evolved, and we want to capture it." Having performed on stage with an orchestra, Ringwald plans to get the music on a record. "Playing with the symphony is a dream," she adds. "The challenge is finding that feeling of intimacy you have with a small group. It'll be a new experience, but I'm always up for new challenges."



Colette Lush

PENTHOUSE REBORN

Heaven 17 are rebooting their seminal debut, *Penthouse And Pavement*. To celebrate its 35th anniversary the Sheffield legends will tour a brand new electronic version of the classic album in full this autumn. Their nine-date jaunt kicks off on 20 October at the O2 Academy Liverpool and finishes up at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire on 30 October. The second half of the show will see Heaven 17 transform into British Electric Foundation featuring invited special guests including Glen Matlock, Mari Wilson, Peter Hooton (The Farm) and, of course, Glenn Gregory.



National Björk

Björk is still fighting for a Highland National Park in Iceland. The singer visited Reykjavik City Hall earlier this year to sign a new statement of intent made by a unified coalition that declares the Icelandic people's will to create a new national park and save the country's central highlands from destruction. The proposed Highland National Park would be owned by the Icelandic nation as a whole, and would support the ecologically efficient use of the country's land based on the ideals of natural conservation and sustainability. It would be one of the nation's greatest contributions to the protection of nature. Björk recently won International Female Award at the BRITs and is working a new album, due later this year.

GODFATHERS of POP

— STEVE JANSEN —

The Japanese embraced their namesake band long before the Brits did. Initially derided by the UK music press, Japan went on to make five albums (three going gold) that took them from glam pop to revered, minimalist art rock. Since their split in '82, drummer Steve Jansen has been the common denominator in off-shoot projects, including the Dolphin Brothers with Richard Barbieri and Rain Tree Crow with all four members. Last year, the long-time photographer put out his first book, *Through A Quiet Window*, and this month he releases his second solo album, *Tender Extinction*. We caught up with Jansen at home in Ealing...

You all grew up in South London. Was the idea of forming a visually striking band pure escapism?

It wasn't an idea, it was a necessity! When we were growing up there were suddenly certain pop stars suggesting things that were possible, rather than this mundane look that was going on at the time. It was more adventurous and androgynous, and you played with your sexuality. When you bumped into some skinheads down Catford High Street it made you feel very different, and that was a good feeling.

Were you ever beaten up?

Just the once. David and I were waiting at a bus stop and this group of thugs started calling us names, because the assumption was that you were gay. We knew they were going to catch us, so we stopped running. They just bundled us for a few minutes and ran off.

You wouldn't be able to run in your outfits anyway, would you?

What do you think we were wearing, stilettos? It was just long dyed hair, really. We'd have been alright in Chelsea, or North London. But South London? Nah.



What was the initial music press reaction to Japan?

Scathing! I can't blame them – we were learning our craft and we looked pretty strange. We were slated by the *NME* for being pretentious and manufactured. Paul Morley hated the first few albums, then changed his opinion around *Tin Drum*. But then, what does he know?

What was it like with your manager Simon Napier-Bell?

He can blag. He can generate interest. The fact that he pursued a record contract was good, but there were issues with money. I didn't trust him. A lot must have been made from our first tour in Japan, selling out two nights at 12,000-seaters, but we didn't really see any of it. It carried on that way right to the last world tour, from which we walked away with six grand. Probably the lighting guy made more.

Japan had quite an aloof image. Is that fair to say?

We didn't really play the game in the

way that some bands did. We were probably shyer than a lot of people in that profession. Although, Mick did do *Tiswas* and got pied in the face.

Why is Japan so seldom heard on the radio these days?

We didn't use the building blocks of pop music. Especially with the later stuff like the last album, it's just not radio-friendly. But maybe that's a good thing. I'm not fond of all that golden-oldie stuff and I don't respect artists that just regurgitate hits on retro tours. It's not something that falls in line with how I work with music.

Mick Karn died in 2011. What was it like working on his final EP as Dalis Car, *InGladAloneness*?

That was difficult. Mick wasn't well enough to finish it. He came back to London from Cyprus and it was a case of pulling in resources to try and get it done for him. He asked if I'd mix it. He felt that I was someone he could leave it in the hands of. He wanted his son to have something from that period.

What do you think of the way equipment has changed since Japan's era?

There are things to be said for analogue, but not a lot. Maybe the look. You don't need chunky gear filling up your house when you can have virtual synths. It's more fun, you can transform each sound. Composition for me isn't about finding a nice set of chords and a song to sit on top, it's more atmospheric. I like to work with things that suggest ideas.

You'll be working again with singer Thomas Feiner, who appears on your album *Tender Extinction*. Will you tour?

There's no reason why not. It's a band project – three Swedes and myself. Thomas can get up there and sing, and everyone's into the idea. **Jenny Valentish**

STILL SEARCHING

FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS, DEXYS, FORMERLY DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS, HAVE BEEN ABOUT PASSION, INTENSITY AND COMMITMENT, AND THAT'S NOT ABOUT TO CHANGE. AS THEY RELEASE A BRAND NEW ALBUM, KEVIN ROWLAND AND SEAN READ DISCUSS MUSIC AND THE MEANING OF LIFE...

PAUL LESTER

Kevin Rowland is in courteous but mildly combative mood, which is exactly as you'd want him to be. "What? I've never played at a f***ing Guilty Pleasures night," the Dexys frontman recoils when your reporter says he remembers seeing him in 2014, briefly manning the wheels of steel at one of DJ and broadcaster Sean Rowley's club nights. But then with Rowland you soon learn to check your facts. "It was a soul night," he points out, somewhat sternly. "F***ing Guilty Pleasures. I wouldn't be associated with that. I played a song by Harold Melvin & The Bluenotes? Sounds like me."

Classic Pop has come to interview Rowland on the occasion of a new album, *Let The Record Show: Dexys Do Irish And Country Soul*. We're on the terrace of a cafe/restaurant on a sunny day in East London and the moustachioed Rowland is – and this you'd also expect – esoterically attired in a newsboy cap, a cream-with-blue-stripes French seafaring jumper and brown high-waister jumbo cords with braces.

Do they classify as trousers?

"They've got two legs, haven't they?" he says of the garment that, to these eyes, resembles trawlermen's dungarees. Rowland does this a lot – responds to questions with an enquiry of his own. Everything is scrutinised. But if that makes him sound confrontational, he's not – although that would be okay as well. This is, after all, the obdurate mastermind behind three of the greatest long-playing



**"OCCASIONALLY
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LOVED THE LAST
ALBUM'"**

The train-hopping
Dexys Midnight
Runners pictured
somewhere near
Birmingham, 1980



POP UP Dexys premiered *Let The Record Show*... with a typically stylish video to accompany the band's version of Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now*, first a hit for Judy Collins in 1967



records of all time: 1980's *Searching For The Young Soul Rebels*, 1982's *Too-Rye-Ay* and 1985's *Don't Stand Me Down*, when they were known as Dexys Midnight Runners (aka The Teams That Meet In Caffe) and prone to radical changes of image, from docker bruiser to gypsy wanderer to Wall Street banker chic. He's earned the right to be a bit grouchy. Besides, that's why he was so compelling: the wilful refusal to play by the rules, the terse communiqués to the music press instead of interviews, the run-ins with record companies and journalists, the random, finicky loathing of middle-class types using expressions such as "tongue-in-cheek" or "fabulous".

Actually, today, Rowland is thoughtful, polite, making sure I can still pick up his voice on my recorder when he moves out of the glare of the sun, even offering to buy me a bar of chocolate because he fancies one himself. It's just that he's permanently poised to challenge lazy assumptions. He's got auto-correct syndrome. Let's see: the new album's intro song, *Women Of Ireland*, seems to set the melancholy tone, doesn't it? "Well, it's not exactly oompah-oompah, is it?" he replies, tersely.

At this – and we're still only five minutes into the interview – Rowland disappears for a glucose fix, leaving me with Sean Read, musician and co-producer of *Let The Record Show*. Read has been a member of Dexys since the last album, 2012's wonderful *One Day I'm Going To Soar*, but he's been a fan for far longer. "One of the first gigs I went to was The Specials and Selecter, with Dexys third on the bill, at Great Yarmouth Tivoli on the 2-Tone tour in

1979," he reminisces while his boss is out of earshot. "I was considered nerdy and geeky because I played brass in the school orchestra, and suddenly this band came onstage with a brass section upfront, like The Clash doing soul, and it was an amazing moment of revelation. Now I'm in the band. It's like a dream."

Was his reverence an obstacle?

"It was at first," he admits. "It was hard not to spend the whole time with your tongue hanging out. I learned to play saxophone listening to *Young Soul Rebels*. So standing next to Jim [Paterson, trombone] 30 years later playing *Tell Me When My Light Turns Green* was incredible."

Rowland returns to the table, bar of chocolate in hand. He explains that he first had the idea for *Let The Record Show* – featuring interpretations of Irish songs as well as pop, rock and soul classics, from Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now* to Rod Stewart's *You Wear It Well* – back in the mid-Eighties.

Is there a theme to the collection? "I can't think of one," he says. "Can you?" Well... there's a lot of longing, for people and places. Rowland seems to not be too displeased with this assessment. "Okay," he says, chomping away. "That's interesting."

There's even suppressed rage, on the version of The Bee Gees' *To Love Somebody*, where Rowland extemporises, "Please don't be so flipping kind". It is, I venture, like hearing Johnny Rotten singing a love ballad. "I hope it isn't," he winces. "Not that he's not a good singer, but I don't want to sound like him. Attitude-wise? Oh, I had to bring myself to it. It's no good doing it like The Bee Gees. No point, is there?"

Let The Record Show is a very Dexys title. It's declarative, with a burning sense of mission...

"Yeah," he agrees. "I didn't really think about it. It's an intuitive thing. I started doing it when we did gigs during 2013-14; if someone played a real good solo, I found myself going, 'Let the record show.'"

Rowland has been keen to draw the distinction between "covers" – with its intimation of rote repetition – and interpretations. Like David Bowie and Bryan Ferry before him – on *Pin Ups* and *These Foolish Things* (both 1973) – he has, on *Let The Record Show*, used others' material as the launchpad for some intriguing stylistic peregrinations. Rowland inhabits the songs, and in so doing changes their shape, their meaning. They range from the relatively new – an unexpected take on Dianne Warren's 1997 composition for LeeAnn Rimes, *How Do I Live* – to the ancient: Irish folk songs of obscure provenance such as *Carrickfergus* and *Curragh Of Kildare*. Jerome Kern's Thirties show tune *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* gets a sensitive treatment. How about the lyric, "All who love are blind". Do you believe that, Kevin?

"I'm not saying that," he chides. "The person singing the song is talking about his new love but 'they' said 'Some day you'll find/ All who love are blind'. The singer of the song isn't saying that. He's been hurt, hasn't he? 'Smoke gets in your eyes' – he's crying; they're gloating. They're kind of saying, 'We told you.' You didn't know that?"

Rowland proceeds to quote the entire lyric, pausing only to consider the wisdom of keeping the phrase "gaily laughed" in Dexys' revamp and to ponder the significance of the word "chafed". There are further explorations of the lyrics to *40 Shades Of Green*, *How Do I Live*, and other songs on *Let The Record*

The nucleus of Dexys,
2016: Lucy Morgan, Kevin
Rowland, Sean Read



Show. Is there such a thing, *Classic Pop* wonders, as a requited love song? Would Dexys' exemplary canon have turned out rather differently had Rowland found true love aged 20?

"Who says I didn't?"

Read helpfully intervenes. "It's life experience, isn't it?" he offers. "Making the record, Kevin was like a film director. He came to me during *To Love Somebody*, when I was doing the backing vocals, and said, 'That's good, but next time you sing it bring up some image from the past of some time you've been spurned or rejected and sing it to them. Give it everything, the bitterness and accusation.' You use all those experiences as tools."

Does emotional pain create better work? "Being tortured by love – is that a good thing?" muses Rowland. "I don't know. You can make a few bob out of it, I suppose."

There is heartache of a different stripe on *The Town I Loved So Well*, written by Phil Coulter about his childhood in Northern Ireland. Rowland found it easy to empathise with the sentiments in the song, its recollections of innocent childhood days in Derry and darker times circa the Troubles.

"The earlier part of the song was easy to relate to because I just thought about Wolverhampton, where I lived till I was 10," he explains. "I thought about the buildings there and my brothers, and what we did there. I thought about my brother's band in a workingman's club, which is how I started off – that I related to. The bit about the Troubles – I went to Derry in the Eighties and saw stuff, I went to Belfast and met a couple of people... I saw the Occupation. I got a sense of it. And my parents are from Ireland. So I felt strongly enough about it and connected enough with it to be able to sing that song."

Torment, dissatisfaction, righteous indignation: these are just some of the things that have propelled Kevin Rowland – from Wolverhampton via Ireland and Harrow, North London – these past 38 years, since forming Dexys Midnight Runners in 1978. The belligerent brass of *Searching For The Young Soul Rebels* and its attendant No. 1 single *Geno* and Top 10 follow-up *There, There, My Dear* seemed to blast the post-punk landscape clean. In an ingenious coup, the follow-up, *Too-Rye-Ay*, featuring *The Celtic Soul Brothers* and global hit *Come On Eileen*, made banjos and violins relevant in the age of synthpop and new romantic, while the intense seven-minute centrepiece *Until I Believe In My Soul* made nostalgia utterly contemporary (“I’m on the train from New Street to Euston and out to Harrow again/ Trying to get the feeling back that I had in 1972”). Dexys’ last album for 27 years, *Don’t Stand Me Down*, was a commercial and critical disaster, but it has since been reappraised and is widely considered Rowland’s finest work, despite or rather because of its engagingly stilted dialogues between him and band member Billy Adams.

Rowland, 62, professes to hate looking back, but there is a lot of yearning in Dexys. Is there a time when he was happiest?

“No, I don’t think so,” he says. “No, I try to live in the moment. Try to. Don’t always manage it.”

As you get older, it gets harder. You accumulate more past.

“I know. It’s a pain in the arse,” he says, laughing a little. “I don’t like to look back musically. That’s why we don’t repeat. I absolutely hate looking back now.”

Is this the best time to be in Dexys? The previous incarnations were fraught with difficulties and Rowland found success hard to handle. And that’s not even mentioning his ‘comeback’ in 1999 with the *My Beauty* solo album on Creation Records that found him wearing a blue velvet dress and women’s lingerie on the sleeve.

“It is for me,” quips Read.

“I do like it,” considers Rowland. “I still find it stressful. But I think I’m recognising the stress now. I never knew I was stressed before, I was just rolling along with everything.”

Would the Rowland of today tell the 29-year-old him to enjoy it more?

He pauses for a moment.

“I probably wouldn’t look at things that way or look back at myself,” he decides. “Because that’s how I was then and this is how I am now.”

A totally different person?

“I don’t know. What do you reckon?”

Well, there’s the same desire for perfection and feelings of frustration about love and life. You certainly haven’t ironed out the idiosyncrasies.

“No,” he concedes. He sighs. “I don’t know. It’s so long ago, man, I can’t remember. It does feel like a different person. Surely everybody does?”

For Read, everything that made Dexys great is still in place. “Musically it’s completely different,” he acknowledges, “but as far as style and beauty and integrity and absolute 100 percent immersion in what we’re doing – that hasn’t changed. The same values are there that have always been.”

Rowland struggles to connect with old Dexys: “I haven’t listened to those records for years. I’m

DID YOU KNOW...?

LESSER-KNOWN FACTS FROM THE WORLD OF DEXYS

- Kevin Rowland can do a more than passable impression of Jon Voight in the movie *Midnight Cowboy*, especially the bit where he says, “Only damn thing I been good for is lovin’.”

- Sean Read once had a job fixing washing machines.

- Rowland used to work in clothes store C&A in London’s Marble Arch.

- He was also a member in his teens of Young Kingsbury Team aka The YKT, a North-West London street gang.

- Rowland gave all his silver, gold and platinum discs to his mum. “She didn’t even put them up [on the wall],” he says. “Well, she did for a while, then she took them down. I don’t want to walk into my mum’s place and see gold discs on the wall.”

- When he was 20, Rowland saw Roxy Music at Birmingham Odeon and later stood outside their hotel, waiting to catch a glimpse of his heroes. “But after about an hour I went, ‘F*** this’ and went home.”

- Following their *Classic Pop* interview, Sean took the bus home from the interview while Kevin got a cab (let the record show).

“IT’S SO LONG AGO, I CAN’T REMEMBER. IT DOES FEEL LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON”

absolutely in the middle of what we’re doing now. [The past] is of no relevance to me. The fact that it means that much to people is amazing, incredible. But I don’t want to think too much about that. I don’t think it’s healthy.”

Does he get recognised a lot?

“Not loads,” he replies. “It’s not like I can’t walk down the street.”

What kind of reactions does he get from people?

“Occasionally they want me to look back, but I try and steer them away from that. It means a lot to me when people say, ‘I loved the last album.’ But when they go, ‘Remember you back in the Eighties?’ – that does absolutely nothing for me. I’d rather not have that conversation. No offence to anybody. I never interrupt them. I sometimes say, ‘That’s good but I’m in the present now.’”

Rowland appears to have craved success and loathed it once he got it.

“Oh, yeah,” he says. “The little bit of success I had taught me that it is a very hard thing to negotiate.”

He had more than a little bit: *Come On Eileen* was the biggest hit of 1982 and it and the album charted all over the world. And yet he famously spent that New Year’s Eve indoors, miserable and alone.



Kevin Rowland performs *Curragh Of Kildare and My National Pride for Imagining Ireland* at the Royal Festival Hall, April 2016

© Getty Images

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW ANYBODY CAN BE SATISFIED WITH SUCCESS. IT'S AN ILLUSION"

Classic Pop finds this astonishing. "There you go," he says. "Why shouldn't I? It's just image, man."

Has that dissatisfaction driven you on?

"I dunno. Probably. Possibly. I don't think it's pleasant, to feel dissatisfied. But maybe it does drive you a bit. I don't understand how anybody can be satisfied with success. It's an illusion. I like what Jim Carrey said: 'I wish everybody could be rich and famous and have their dreams come true so that they can see that it's not the answer.' It's true. Billy Adams said that; he said he was grateful for the experience [of being in Dexys] because he found out that the thing he thought would make him happy, didn't."

After years in the wilderness, when he was abusing drugs and on the breadline, Rowland the troubled soul rebel has found the answer to life's travails: peace of mind. Or has he? "Real love? I don't know anything about that," he sings on the aching final

track from *One Day I'm Going To Soar, It's OK John Joe*. "I'm unhappy living like this, feeling ugly and tired and jaded inside. I've worked hard to find some peace but at best it's only fleeting."

How does one achieve peace of mind? "I don't know," he responds wearily. "I'm a f***ing pop singer! Why are you asking me? Don't you know?"

Luckily, Read is here to save the day. "As long as you've got your health and there's nothing wrong in your life, then that's peace of mind," he suggests. "Not worrying, not being stressed-out – it's worth more than gold."

"You can't sort out all of your problems," worries Rowland. "That's not peace of mind. It's about existing in an imperfect world. I tried to achieve peace of mind with various things..."

In 1994 he went on a health retreat in India: "It was this Ayurvedic place, not a Western pampering thing – hardcore!" he told *The Telegraph* newspaper in 2012. "'Basic' doesn't adequately describe it. You just had a tiny bed, and a bucket. I had five weeks sitting in this garden, no phone, no internet – so, whatever you're running from, you have to face it."

Looking back, did it help?

"A little bit."

Would he recommend it?

He laughs, slightly exasperated.

"I don't know," he shrugs. "If you fancy it – who knows? If it works for you."

Is it weird, people expecting all the answers?

Rowland smiles. "They don't normally."

The talk continues long into the afternoon as we discuss "running the gauntlet" of violent teenage gangs growing up in Harrow, the difference between style and fashion, and being a harsh taskmaster in the studio ("As Roy Keane said: 'Fail to prepare, prepare to fail.'"). For now, though, all that remains is to ask

him whether it has been a burden, the obligation to live up to the Myth of Kevin Rowland?

"Do you know what, I think it was for a while," he accepts. "I think I used to find myself – wait a minute, what do you mean when you say that?"

You know, the incident where you were supposed to have beaten up a journalist, the time Dexys

stole the master tapes of their debut album from EMI, your reputation for obstreperousness...

"It's a long time ago, all that," he gently admonishes. "I think I probably went through a phase where I was very aware of people's perception of me and that may have affected me and the way I conducted myself, do you know what I mean? But now I'm better at managing that."

Were people willing you to be "outrageous Kevin"? "I think so. People want you to be wacky and say crazy things. I wasn't proud of hitting somebody."

Although people do do it...

"Well, they do do it and now I'm at a place where I'm not doing [that sort of thing]. People go, 'Oh Kevin, you were great, and you were this and that', and I'm like, 'Well, that wasn't a very happy time in my life', you know? It might have been cool to look at, but then I don't really think about that now. I've gone

beyond that. I don't even have to challenge people's expectations. I just do what I do – it's all intuitive. None of it's conscious: 'Oh, let's make a decision to do this.' It's like a path that we follow. I mean, I'm lucky to have ideas."

Is that a relief?

"I don't know about relief. It's just there. It probably is a relief because when I didn't have ideas and I didn't know what to do I was in turmoil."

Heavy stuff. Surely, I suggest finally, creating a body of work must bring satisfaction? For Read, maybe, but not for Rowland.

"Even after *One Day I'm Going To Soar*," he says, "which I was really happy with, and all the reviews were great... there's a part of you that thinks, if we make this great album, do these great shows and the cover's great and the video's great, everything's going to be fantastic and rosy. But it isn't. Because success is illusory. It can't fill that hole inside of you. It cannot. Nothing outside of you can."

Let The Record Show: Dexys Do Irish And Country Soul is released by Rhino ■

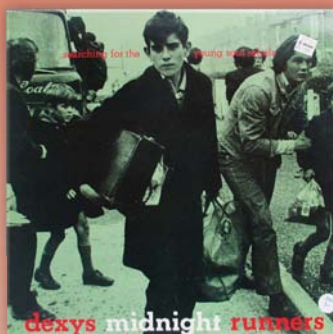


JUST LOOKING DEXYS AND KEVIN ROWLAND, ALBUM BY ALBUM

1 SEARCHING FOR THE YOUNG SOUL REBELS

DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS (1980)

At the start of the album, Dexys flip the bird to Deep Purple, even The Sex Pistols and The Specials. But then, *Searching*... felt like a Year Zero artefact. Every song is memorable, from *Burn It Down* (originally released as single *Dance Stance*, which scraped the Top 40 in early 1980) to *Tell Me When My Light Turns Green*, No. 1 hit *Geno* and *There, There, My Dear*. Welcome the new soul vision. Highest chart position: No. 6.



2 TOO-RYE-YAY

DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS (1982)

Out went the Mean Streets garb, in came the wild-hearted outsider gear. Out too, largely, went the brass, replaced by strings, courtesy of Helen O'Hara. Virtually every track on here is a winner: opener *The Celtic Soul Brothers*, the surging *Let's Make This Precious*, the sprightly cover of *Jackie Wilson Said*, the keening *Old*, the searingly intense *Until I Believe In My Soul*, and *Come On Eileen*, four of the most joyous minutes in pop history. Highest chart position: No. 2.



3 DON'T STAND ME DOWN

DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS (1985)

Album three was divisive. It was still heavy on the strings, but Rowland went further off-piste with two spoken reminiscences (if you've got the 1997 Creation reissue), and *This is What She's Like*, with he and Billy Adams conversing elliptically. Savaged at the time, today *Don't Stand Me Down* is regarded as Dexys' peak, although it's less tune-rich than its predecessor. File under "flawed masterpiece". Highest chart position: No. 22.



4 THE WANDERER

KEVIN ROWLAND (1988)

Rowland's solo debut was produced by Eumir Deodato, who had worked with everyone from Sinatra to Kool & The Gang, which augured well. Unfortunately, defeated by the poor commercial fate of *Don't Stand Me Down*, the album was a muted, lacklustre affair comprising mostly originals – of which *Walk Away* (No. 95), *Tonight* (No. 81) and *Young Man* were the (uniformly unsuccessful) singles – and a cover, Harlan's Howard's *Heartaches By The Number*.



5 MY BEAUTY

KEVIN ROWLAND (1999)

You had to admire Rowland's cojones (not that you could see them, just) as he wore that outfit on the sleeve. Lingerie controversy aside, *My Beauty* was a conventional collection of covers, with some affecting moments, particularly poignant in the light of Rowland's drug-related problems of the time. The versions of *The Long And Winding Road*, *You'll Never Walk Alone* and especially *The Greatest Love Of All* are moving reminders of Rowland's interpretive gifts.



6 ONE DAY I'M GOING TO SOAR

DEXYS (2012)

The flat production was distracting at first, then the songs took hold and the homespun feel afforded the music greater intimacy. Among the disco shuffles and pop grooves was *It's OK John Joe*, as beautiful as anything Dexys have ever done. The bit where he croons an extract from Marvin Gaye's *If I Should Die Tonight*, then adds, "He was discussing a different subject at that point"? Priceless. Highest chart position: No. 13.





WHEN THE EAGLE FLIES

A FILM SET IN THE EIGHTIES HAS INSPIRED NEW MUSIC FROM AN IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION OF POP ARTISTS. GARY BARLOW, ANDY MCCLUSKY, NIK KERSHAW, TONY HADLEY AND PETER COX EXPLAIN HOW IT ALL WENT DOWN...

RUDY BOLLY



Some of the finest pop voices of the Eighties, gathered in honour of an unlikely, even infamous, sporting personality, Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards – it's something that no one could possibly have predicted. Yet it's true. Tony Hadley, Nik Kershaw, Howard Jones, Holly Johnson and Andy McCluskey are among those who have joined forces for *Fly*, a soundtrack to the film about the endearingly ropey British ski jumper who competed at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. The tracklist reads like a Who's Who of the decade, with Kim Wilde, Marc Almond, Andy Bell, ABC and Go West also on board – and stranger still, it fell to Gary Barlow to pull it all together.

It may seem churlish to task a voice so associated with the Nineties with creating an Eighties musical celebration,

but, as it happens, the Take That man is just as big a fan of that era's pop music as the rest of us.

"It was an amazing decade for music," affirms Barlow. "These are all artists I was listening to while I was growing up. And for this project I wanted the legendary voices of that decade – the kind of voices that as soon as you hear them, you feel like you're 15 again."

It turned into a labour of love for Barlow who, at 45 years old, only just missed out on a career in the Eighties himself. "That's my only regret – that I didn't get to make records then," he says. "I spent the whole of last year in that decade making up for it."

It was Matthew Vaughn, producer of the film *Eddie The Eagle*, who first approached Barlow, and the singer's response and his ambitious ideas far exceeded his original expectations. Rather than record the songs himself, Barlow decided to form what is almost certainly the most impressive Eighties

pop star line-up committed to tape since Band Aid. And, rather like a 21st century Bob Geldof, it was left to Barlow to pick up the receiver and sell the idea to each pop star himself...

"I was apprehensive about approaching the legends of the Eighties because I was worried they wouldn't get it... but, honestly, no one turned me down or didn't get it," Barlow marvels. "I said, 'It's going to be like an iconic supergroup! All on one soundtrack, all on one album'. It's not a pastiche record, but a contemporary record of who all those artists are now."

"Me and Matthew met in November 2014, and he's the same age as me, so we both grew up listening to the same music," he continues. "We sat in the Charlotte Street Hotel in London and made a list, and Andy [McCluskey] was the first guy I went to see."

The OMD man was a little suspicious when he first heard about the idea. "It was quite bizarre," McCluskey laughs.

Nik Kershaw performs at Gary Barlow's *Fly* showcase at London's One Mayfair. See our review on page 110

"GARY KNEW PRECISELY WHAT VOICES WOULD WORK TO FIT THE EMOTION"



"He said, 'Can I have a meeting with you?' I'm like, 'What about?' 'Can't tell you'. And then you hear, 'We're doing a soundtrack for *Eddie The Eagle*.' I was thinking, 'Am I on *Candid Camera* with Gary Barlow?'

McClusky's arm was duly twisted, and other Eighties legends soon followed – although not everyone had the time to contribute. Nik Kershaw was one of them: "I was about to disappear on tour so it was a really inopportune time," Kershaw tells us. "I explained to Gary I would love to write something new, but it was going to be difficult. He asked if there was anything I did have, so I sent him a track from my last album called *The Sky's The Limit* and he said, 'That's perfect lyrically, but it doesn't sound Eighties enough.' So I sent him all of the parts of the recording to remix,

and they put a nice fat old snare drum on there. That did the trick, apparently."

Tony Hadley was halfway through the last Spandau Ballet tour but didn't want to miss out either. "I'd met Gary on several occasions," says Hadley. "He phoned me up and said, 'Your voice would be great for this song.'"

"I had so little time to record it, so I had to get it all done on one Saturday morning. My song is called *Moment*, it's quite uptempo. It's a driving electronica piece. I suppose people would expect me to do a lush ballad, but *Moment* is all about Eddie's moment, and Gary knew precisely what voices would work best to fit the emotion."

All the invited participants agree that Barlow deserves huge credit for thinking outside of the soundtrack box. "It's a brave thing for Gary to do," Nik Kershaw says. "The easy thing for the record company to do would be trawl through all the same old Eighties hits and stick them on the soundtrack. But Gary didn't do that because he has a genuine passion for that music and the people that made it."

Revisiting the past is something many artists from that era have been reluctant to do over the years. "I've been talking to the other guys, and in some respects we've been trying desperately to shake off the sound of 30 years ago," says Andy McClusky, "and then he comes along and says, 'I want you to sound exactly like that... get all the old synths out!' It was good fun."

These artists regularly share the same stages, but rarely do they get an opportunity to actually make new music. "We do this quite a lot at the Let's Rock and Rewind festivals," says Nik Kershaw. "But this is different because there's new music involved, and a lot of media attention. We certainly aren't used to that anymore."

Go West's Peter Cox agrees. "I think it's important to be seen to be making more music, but it's on a much less high profile level now," he says. "And times have changed a lot since the Eighties."



Back then we would invest and arguably lose a lot of money to tour and promote the record, whereas now I make my living entirely from doing live performances."

Shaking off the association with a specific moment in time is no longer a concern for Tony Hadley. "Now everyone wants to embrace the Eighties," he muses. "I have a radio show that is constantly breaking records in terms of listeners. But for a period of time it was a naff decade, and people didn't want to mention it. Now I think the whole fashion relates back to those days – it's become a revered time. I just wish people were as creative today as they were in the Eighties."

A large part of the era's sound was down to the technology available, and it hampered artists as much as it inspired them. "It's a very different process of music making," considers Barlow. "Wrestling around with old tape machines and vintage synthesisers.

Just to make a bassline, to hook up sequencers and then get the sound you want... we're talking about hours.

"As an artist back then, you could only make a record every one or two years. There was no way you could possibly have the time to make any more."

Ironically, what we now think of as the 'archetypal Eighties sound' remains a mystery even to some of those involved.

"I must admit, when Gary said, 'Can you make your music sound more Eighties', I genuinely didn't have a clue how to do it," laughs Kershaw. "That might sound weird, seeing as that's where I'm supposed to be coming from!

"I don't really know exactly what we were doing back then to make it sound like that, other than just using the available technology. We just tried to make things sound the best that they could and I would do the same thing now, given the same equipment.

"So to go back and engineer it while pretending you don't have computers available, well... I couldn't really get my head around it. In the end my track fell to somebody who wasn't even born in

the Eighties to remix it – which means he knows it better than we do."

Barlow himself believes that great musical moments of the Eighties were down to much more than limited synths and drum machines. "There's a specific style of singing from that decade that those singers have never lost – it's a very manly kind of sound," he points out. "When Tony Hadley sings, I'm just transformed into a teenager again. When I hear Holly Johnson's first line in *Ascension*, I'm back to being 13 years old. We spent all this time messing around with technology, but actually it wasn't until we got the singers in that we really captured the moment."

Being so indelibly linked with a specific time meant artists often had a short shelf-life, and like so many stars of the Eighties, Barlow has seen his own fame falter on occasions.

"There have been plenty of downs in my career," he says, recalling how his solo career stalled when Take That first split. "The music industry can be hard, and you have to keep putting yourself out for knockbacks and criticism."



"IT'S A VERY BRITISH THING. TO ME HE'S A HERO – NOT EVEN AN ANTI-HERO, A HERO"



"Anybody who's been in music a long time has downs, because that's what life is all about."

All this struck a strong chord with Tony Hadley, who also had to overcome some adversity following Spandau Ballet's acrimonious split. "I remember watching a documentary on Gary and it was very telling because he hit a low point in his life where nobody would return a phone call, so it must be nice now to be where everybody wants to be his best mate again," he nods. "The music biz in this country sucks. I could really relate to what he's been through, because of what happens with me and Spandau."

These days Nik Kershaw is philosophical about the vagaries of media attention. "It's a struggle how you are perceived, especially when you are younger, but there gets to a point in your career where you don't really care anymore," he considers. "We are all doing our thing, something creative, new records, or gigging. A lot of my peers would say the same thing. The music business that we knew back then doesn't exist anymore."

For Eddie The Eagle to be the name that brings all of these amazing people together remains a tad surreal. "I was trying to explain the concept to an American friend of mine the other day," says Kershaw. "I said, 'He's a guy that came last in the Calgary Olympics,' and he couldn't grasp the concept at all! 'Why would you make a film about somebody who came last?'"

"It's a very British thing, I guess. But to me he's a hero, not even an anti-hero, just a hero. Eddie looked at something and said, 'Don't tell me I can't do that, I'm going to do it.'"

Barlow agrees. "We love underdogs. We love the losers. We don't care much for winners. But Eddie Edwards encapsulates Britain – we love being downtrodden as a nation, and the loser is our winner. And he was a hero for that 15 minutes."

For McClusky it was definitely Eddie who inspired his track *Thrill Me*. "The script was brilliant and was the hook that got everybody in. It was just a remarkable series of events. For me, it got more and more surreal as it went

on, because I did the music but was struggling with the lyrics, and I see Gary emailing, 'If you need a hand...', and I'm like 'Yeah, Gary, can you write the lyrics?'"

Even the movie's stars – Taron Egerton and Hugh Jackman – ended up getting involved in McClusky's song. "It sounds brilliant, it sounds like Gary Numan, actually."

Since originally appearing on his 2012 album *Eight*, Kershaw's effort *The Sky's The Limit* now has a new lease of life. "It was for my step daughter when she was changing schools and was being asked what she wanted to do."

"I was like, 'How do you know what you want to do when you're 11 years old?' You could do anything. So it's about all the possible paths ahead of you, not necessarily ski jumping."

In March many of *Fly*'s cast list got together again for a one-off show in London, and it turned into a bit of



a school reunion. Peter Cox: "Working with our contemporaries is always fun, and we are sounding as good as we ever did, if not better." Tony Hadley concurs: "We're all mates. We react to each other like we used to on *Top Of The Pops*, and have some drinkie-poops afterwards. There's a lot of respect for each other, the fact that we survived and are still doing it."

Now, one other question is – would these artists choose to work with Gary Barlow again? "I would," says Kershaw. "We actually first wrote together in the mid-Nineties. I went up to Cheshire and wrote possibly the worst song either of us has ever written. I think Gary went as far as to get somebody to make a demo of it but I don't have a copy. I'll have to ask him for one because maybe it's not as bad as I remember it being! He's gone on leaps and bounds since those days. I've got great respect for him and would love to give it another go."

Of course Barlow is a busy man these days with musicals, Take That albums and now a rumoured BBC TV talent show in the works ("We'd be great judges for it," chips in Peter Cox with a twinkle in his eye). But for now, let's enjoy this unlikely – and successful – celebration of glorious failure. ■

POP_UP Released to cinemas in February, *Eddie The Eagle* has so far gone on to gross over \$34,000,000 worldwide, easily covering its \$23,000,000 budget. Rotten Tomatoes scored it highly at 79%



THE EAGLE SPEAKS...

He was some way off gold, but when Michael 'Eddie the Eagle' Edwards returned from the Winter Olympics of 1988 he was a winner in the eyes of the nation...

Had you set yourself an Olympics goal before you went?

For me, getting to those Olympic games was my gold medal. Even though I came 58th, that didn't really matter. The fact that I got there in the end and lived my dream, that was the most important thing. I was standing on top of the ski jumps in Calgary and thinking, "Wow, this is it. I'm an Olympian."

Why did you become a ski jumper?

I'd been racing competitively since I was a youngster and was in the British squad training for Calgary. Unfortunately, my times started to slip which resulted in my funding being cut. Faced with the prospect of going back home I was given a lifeline after someone told me ski jumping might be an option to restore my funding and, who knows, get a place in the team.

Not everyone was happy about you jumping, were they?

Some thought I was making a mockery of the sport, bringing it into disrepute. I know some officials said, "This is outrageous. We have 50 people at home who can ski better than Edwards, yet they are at home and not at the Olympics." I suppose it just spurred me on, as I looked at it as another thing I would have to overcome.

Afterwards, you became a huge star...

Yes, I remember landing back in London after the Games and waiting for my bags. When about 30 policemen came up to me I just thought, "What have I done? Have they found drugs?" But they told me they were here just to help me through the airport, because about 15,000 people were waiting outside for me.

It was all very surreal. But that only lasted 18 months, two years tops. Thing is, I never looked for fame in the first place.

How is it seeing yourself on the big screen?

Taron Egerton looked just like me back in 1988 when I was 24. He's got all my mannerisms and my accent. In fact, when I first saw him on set it was like looking at myself in the mirror – which was a bit scary. My glasses used to steam up because of the heat coming from the rest of my body. It was no good wiping them. So I just pushed off, not being able to see anything, and hoped that the cold air would clear them.

You now work as a builder and plasterer and give motivational talks. Any more ski jumping plans?

Well, I ski jumped for the first time in 19 years while on a trip in Albertville, France. It was lovely to get that old feeling back of when you're standing at the top of the jump and you're scared stiff and you've got to go down and try to land. It was great fun. I loved it.

More importantly, what do you think of the film's music?

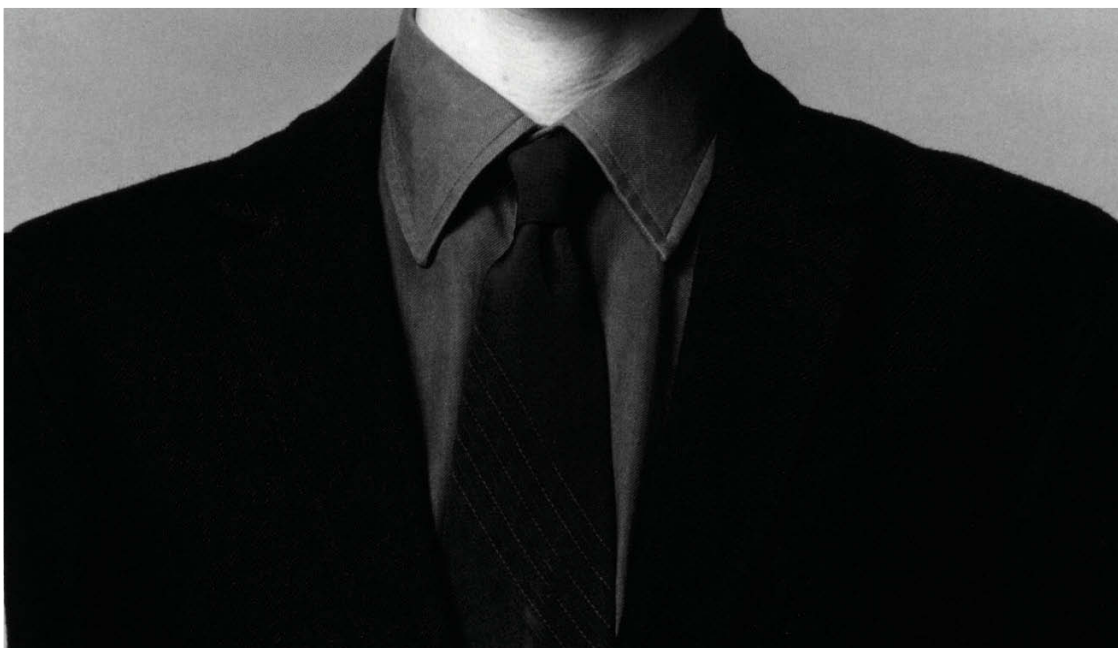
I don't know! I haven't heard it yet!

TO EARTH WITH LOVE

JOHN FOXX WAS IN THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE AT THE START OF THE EIGHTIES BUT HAD FALLEN OUT OF LOVE WITH MUSIC BY THE END OF IT, YET THE LAST 20 YEARS HAS SEEN HIM BUILD A HUGE BODY OF WORK THAT IS NOW CELEBRATED WITH A NEW COMPILATION.

WE CATCH UP WITH ONE OF POP'S FINEST ARCHITECTS...

ANDY JONES





The glorious clashing of genres that inhabited the charts in the Eighties is, in many ways, the reason that this magazine exists. A typical Top 20 of the decade might have contained, well, 20 different styles: a slice of jazz funk, pomp rock, ska, disco... you name it or hum it, it was there along with, of course, several novelty hits scattered in between. Looking back, it was as if the record companies – yes, we had them back then – were simply throwing as many ideas at us as possible, hoping that we'd sort out their next big things for them.

The year 1980 kicked off the decade in a typically schizophrenic style. Its hits included everything from *Babooshka* to *Silver Dream Machine*, *Oops Upside Your Head* to *Baggy Trousers*, *9 To 5* to *Don't Stand So Close To Me*, with a crazy but apt full stop: *There's No One Quite Like Grandma* shoving aside John Lennon's *(Just Like) Starting Over* for the Christmas No. 1 spot. The fact that the St Winifred's School Choir could even be recorded – let alone reach the top of the charts – seems unthinkable, making 1980 resemble some kind of parallel multiverse away from where we are now.



Benge and Foxx, working together under the Maths banner since 2009

As for John Foxx's single *Underpass*, this one stood out as being way away from normal, even in the melting pot of styles that was 1980. A piece of music seemingly inspired by JG Ballard and a song that the word 'dystopian' could have been invented for, *Underpass* was delivered by Foxx as a cold slice of the future, a harsh and synthetic single that was and still is both terrifying and absolutely mesmerising in equal measure – a recording that the producer gods could have slotted into any year in our future but probably thought: 'Stick it in 1980 – it'll be a hit then.'

And it was. This author remembers recording it immediately upon hearing it on Radio 1 – mono cassette, play and record buttons needed, of course. How was it made? Why was it made? What planet was it from? And, more importantly, why the heck was Tony Blackburn playing it? I still have the cassette somewhere: Blackburn says 'Weird, but wonderful' at the end of it (or, more likely knowing him, over the bloody end of it). I have a soft spot for *There's No One Quite Like Grandma* – we all do, surely – but my spot for *Underpass* still throbs 36 years on. It was so alien, so not St Winifred, so not Tony Blackburn, and not even typical of an atypical 1980. So how the hell did it happen? Did it really happen?

Yet *Underpass* is only the tip of the quite extraordinary John Foxx story. Pre-*Underpass* he'd formed Ultravox – yes, that one – but promptly left before *Vienna* was massive (a song that enjoyed its own 'Grandma', of

course, in the form of *Shaddap Your Face*). Post-*Underpass* and the album *Metamatic* – arguably the first pure synthpop album – he changed form several times, released three more different albums and then popped out of existence, seemingly for good.

Foxx then resurfaced in the Nineties as a sculptor, digital artist, techno producer, ambient artist and collaborator extraordinaire, having taken a dance music biscuit to reinvigorate himself and embark on a mission to record, record and record some more with an astonishing array of artists, from Harold Budd to Robin Guthrie, from Benge to Louis Gordon and, most recently, Gary Numan – surely a meeting of synthesisers that will have any studio user of a certain age resonating their filters (yes, mine were oscillating at maximum when I heard).

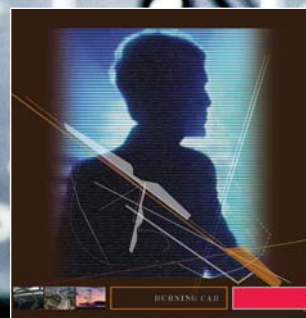
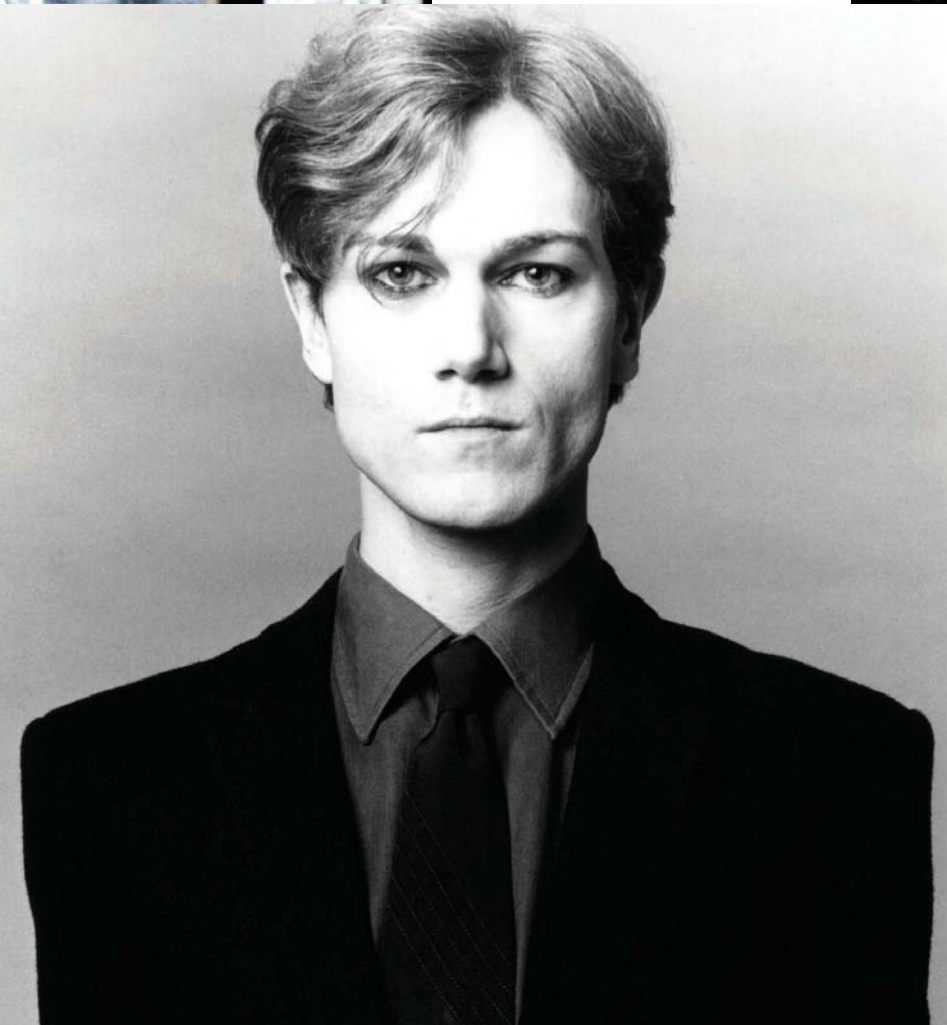
Now Foxx has a catalogue that requires several retrospectives just to keep tabs on, the latest of which is *21st Century: A Man, A Woman And A City*, a selection of tracks from 2000 on that includes everything from *A Funny Thing* with Louis Gordon to the aforementioned Numan track *Talk (Are You Listening To Me?)*.

Start with an exclamation mark

So *Underpass* was just the start, or more accurately the middle. By this point Foxx had already experienced more than most with the first incarnation of Ultravox! – note the additional exclamation – a band more 'art house' than

POP UP Foxx's first public musical outings, he told *The Quietus*, were playing "12-string guitar in the Bolton Octagon in 1973, then in a room over a Salford pub, supporting a Manchester band called Stackwaddy"





'pop house' and attracting the likes of Brian Eno and Conny Plank as producers.

"We started in 1974 but really got consolidated in '76 – that's when we did the first album with Eno," Foxx recalls.

"It was coincidental with punk and part of it in some ways. I remember considering Mick Jones and people like that, thinking 'Should I ask him to be our guitarist?' There was a feeling in London that there had to be a change as there wasn't a musical underground. Everything had gone off into *Top Of The Pops* and glam rock, which was fun, but it wasn't quite what any of us wanted. So we made our own music scene and everybody made their own version of it, from The Clash to The Pistols to us to Simple Minds. It was a homemade, grass roots revolution."

Foxx's Ultravox! had three bites at success: the albums *Ultravox!*, *Ha!-Ha!-Ha!* and *Systems Of Romance*. "Rock bands were respected without ever having had a hit record," he points out. "Record companies were geared to that approach, which I obviously preferred, as it gave us more shots at doing things."

The band eventually moved out of the shadow of punk and adopted the synthesiser, then a cool but still expensive instrument. It would remain a key sound for Ultravox after Foxx's departure in 1979 but it was also one that he'd take with him for his solo work.

"There are certain sounds that I just respond to," he says. "It started with the blues when I was younger: very primitive, beautifully consolidated stuff, like John Lee Hooker. He was the master of simple sounds that aren't

There was this whole new genre of odd-sounding records. I liked that sort of primitive immediacy"

really simple at all – they're actually very sophisticated. When I recorded I always wanted to get something like that with synthesisers... primitive, basic stuff, but to make everything count. That was the mission: from the blues to primitive synths and drum machines. It's not such a big step, really."

Foxx might say that now but even in the topsy-turvy world of 1980, his debut record was a shock to the system. *Metamatic* was an album so synthetic and so futuristic that it almost shocked itself into being a hit along with, of course, that single *Underpass*. Does he look back at the time now and think it strange?

"I think it was," he laughs, "but people were expecting those sounds and liking them because there was suddenly this whole genre of odd-sounding records. It was the game for a while – a whole new genre kicking off. It wasn't bands any more, it was drum machines and a couple of guys, or a girl and a guy making music together. I liked that sort of primitive immediacy."

"It was really Gary [Numan] breaking through as he did in '79 that triggered the whole thing off," he continues, "and without him it would have remained underground. There were other bands coming up who probably would have made it, like Depeche Mode, because they were very young and very much a pop band. So I think it would have surfaced eventually

MORE TO COME

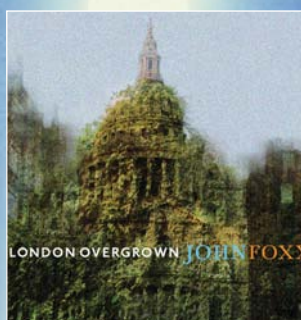
As you might expect, there's no slowing down in the near future for Foxx...

"I want to record with Rob Simon [Ultravox, Magazine, Visage]," John reveals. "All modern guitarists owe him a debt — he is one of the originals and he thinks like no-one else. There's also more coming out with Ruben Garcia — I have lots of fragments that I am working on. Hopefully there is new stuff with Harold Budd as well plus a piano album that I have written."

And, of course, that Numan track...

"Everybody owes Gary a lot. He was the kid who came in and distilled the whole scene into one single: *Are Friends Electric?* The great thing is that he added things himself as well as purifying them. When I listen to *Cars*, for example, it's a real masterpiece — so minimal, and it works so well, and always will. It will always be a classic record because it's so clear, like a piece of modern architecture, so brilliantly conceived and the perfect single."

"I've always liked his music and we've talked about doing something together for years but never done it, as we're always busy. But we finally got a song sorted and I sent it to him in LA and we mixed it at Benge's and it was fine, it was great, a very straightforward operation in the end. It worked out very easily."



ULTRAVOX : SYSTEMS OF ROMANCE



POP_UP 21st Century: A Man, A Woman And A City, out now, gathers Foxx tracks with Matthew Dear, Gazelle Twin, Ghost Box, Robin Guthrie and more. The Deluxe DVD adds 11 Maths-tracked films by director Macoto Tezuka



in some form, but it was dramatic the way that Gary triggered it off – an instant changeover and very welcome for all of us doing that sort of thing.”

Three strikes and out?

Foxx then warmed up with his second album, *The Garden*, which was a return to a more guitar-driven sound. *The Golden Section* in 1983 was his psychedelic, electronic homage to The Beatles, while 1985’s album *In Mysterious Ways* signalled a possible end to his music career. “I didn’t fit any more. I didn’t like what was going on and I didn’t actually like what I was doing either, to be honest – I felt I’d taken a few wrong steps,” he says.

“The whole atmosphere of music changed where there was a lot of soul and perfect pop that I never felt comfortable with, so I thought ‘Well, I’ve got a lot of other things to be getting on with, so I’ll do that’. I wasn’t sure I was coming back, but then the acid and Detroit stuff started coming in and I found that interesting.”

You could say that Foxx has made up for this lost time since his return in the Nineties. Standouts have been the incredible *Cathedral Oceans* series, his *Drift Music* recordings with Harold Budd, the electro Louis Gordon collaborations, plus more recent releases with The Maths (Ben ‘Benge’ Edwards), not forgetting collaborations with Robin Guthrie, Jori Hulkkonen, Steve D’Agostino, Steve Jansen and many more: a huge variety of artists resulting in a huge variety of styles, but with one link...

“It’s just imaginative music,” John reflects, “music that is not necessarily to do with any fashion, but music that demands a bit of imagination to make and listen to – I’d like to think so anyway! All of the artists I have worked with have something to say and seem to relate to stuff I’d done. Or you get in touch with people as you have a sympathy with what they are doing, or they are doing better at something you wanted to do yourself. I had that feeling with everyone on the new album and it was wonderful to work with them.

“It’s exciting to work with people who want to make music for its own sake. It was glorious getting loads of money for doing things in the Seventies, ridiculous advances from record companies, but now that doesn’t exist... so the people who are making music now, you know their intentions are pure.”

Foxx now has a huge back catalogue – just check out www.metamatic.com for a full list – so considering his own retirement plans in the Eighties, does the volume of this output now surprise him?

If you do something for fun, and do it constantly, then you end up with a huge body of work. I write quite quickly. Songs just accumulate”



“Yes, it does,” he replies, “but if you do something for fun, and do it constantly, then you end up with a huge body of work. It’s like my painting and drawing – I’ve done that for years and not thought about it, but if you put it all altogether you suddenly have a big portfolio. It’s the same with songs, they just accumulate. I write quite quickly, I always have done.”

Is there one type of song or musical genre that has so far eluded the prolific John Foxx? “Yeah, there’s one, which is to do a big pop song,” he laughs. “I always liked those huge songs like *All You Need Is Love*, or *All The Young Dudes*, or that Tears For Fears one, *Sowing The Seeds Of Love*. I’ve never really tried, but I’d love to write something like that.

“On the whole, though, I’m pleased,” he concludes. “You realise that you were in the right time at the right place. When you look back you think ‘That’s exactly where I should have been’, and it wouldn’t have worked at any other time. You seize the day without realising that things are changing even as you do it, and then there’s a point where you have five or six years where you know what’s happening and can ride the changes, and if you are really lucky you can go on beyond that... but not many people do.” ■



POP ART

SCOTT KING'S ART HAS REFERENCED DIVERSE POP ICONS, FROM CHER TO THE SEX PISTOLS, FROM GARY NUMAN TO SHAUN RYDER. FRESH FROM SPEAKING AT THE PET SHOP BOYS SYMPOSIUM IN EDINBURGH ABOUT HIS WORK WITH TENNANT AND LOWE, HE GIVES CLASSIC POP THE LOW DOWN ON WORKING WITH THIS ICONIC PARTNERSHIP AND MANY OTHERS, STRETCHING BACK TWO DECADES...

ANDREW DINELEY

Designing a record sleeve must be a very different discipline to working on art pieces. When and how did you get involved with design for the music industry?

The first sleeve I designed was for the band Fluffy, then after that, in 1997, I designed the cover of Jimmy Somerville's single *Safe*. I'd just left the position of Art Director at *i-D Magazine*, so I was grateful for the work. The design for

Safe was based around a tricky symmetrical photograph and the only solution seemed to be to stack the type up, down the middle, so that's what I did.

Earl Brutus followed a year later; this seems to be where you really got to integrate your art into the design.

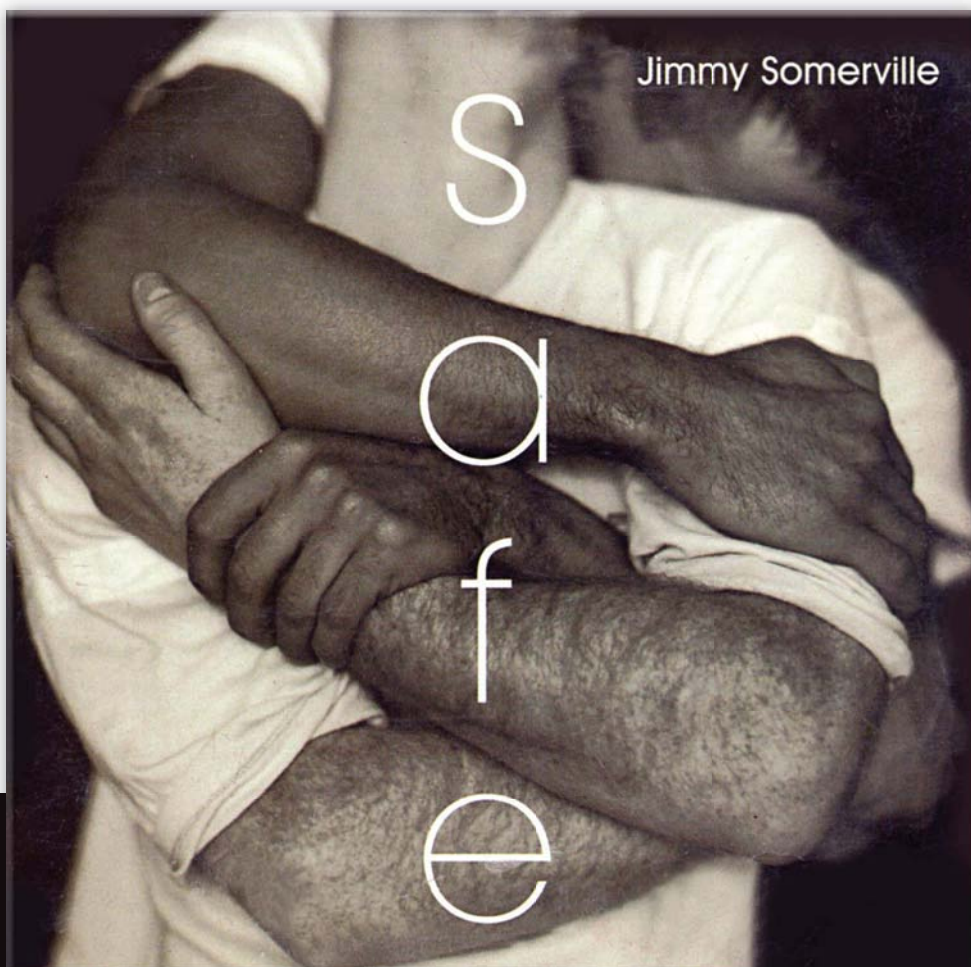
The art piece I created – I've Got A Window Wednesday – that I used on the album sleeve for Earl Brutus' *Tonight You Are The Special One* came from an idea

I'd been carrying around for a while. It was going to be my first 'real artwork' when I stopped being a graphic designer and became a 'real artist'.

I used to live in Hackney, and every day I'd walk past this garage that sold bling for the Hackney boys to tart up their cars – huge, brightly-coloured, chrome-covered Mercs. I wondered who might own these cars and one thought kept coming back to me – 'I bet they would never kill themselves', these cars being so

"The design for Jimmy Somerville's *Safe* was based around a tricky symmetrical photograph and the only solution seemed to be to stack the type up, down the middle, so that's what I did" **SCOTT KING**

Vertical solution: Jimmy Somerville's single *Safe* appeared between his *Dare To Love* and *Manage The Damage* albums

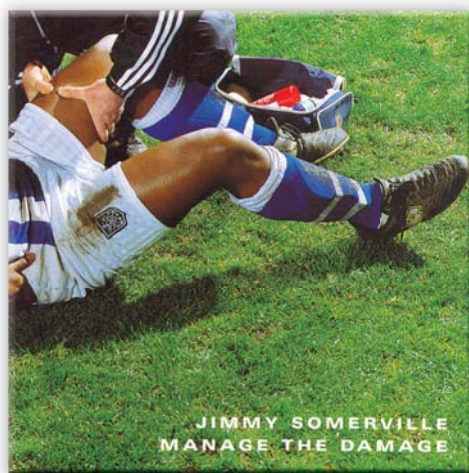


macho and somehow positive. I tried to imagine someone taking a hose from the exhaust pipe into the window and doing themselves in, but I just couldn't. These cars were then replaced in my mind by 'yuppie' or 'executive' cars, and rather than it being a single car/suicide, I imagined a suicide pact – two yuppies, stressed out and maybe failing in business, getting together one Wednesday lunchtime to kill themselves.

The cover for the single *Come Taste My Mind* was less successful. I didn't like how that worked out. The tattooed guy was wrongly cast and the photograph wasn't very good. But it did work in a vulgar, attention-grabbing kind of way.

In 1999 you worked with Jimmy Somerville again on his *Manage The Damage* album and its singles. Photography again dominated the design...

Some gay artists I knew used to go to a sports fetish night where they got dressed up as footballers. I thought that was funny, a good inversion of the machismo associated with football. So, with the photographer Jonathan de Villiers, I developed these subtle ideas that we shot with an amateur football team at Millwall. I felt sorry for the footballers because I don't think they were aware of the idea or the context.



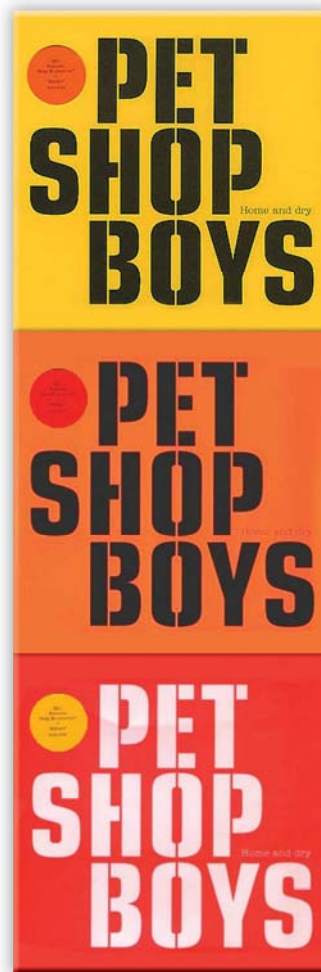
In 2002, Pet Shop Boys' change in direction was reflected in their work with you as a graphic designer.

I was aware of their design legacy with [Mark] Farrow and knew I

couldn't compete on that level, so I went the other way, making something brutal. My first sleeve for them was for the single *Home And Dry*. I did something very un-PSB and Neil liked the idea. When I nervously showed it to him, he loved the big stencil font and fluorescent colours. "It's so butch, so Hoxton", he said.

"We'd seen this poster [Scott King] did called 'Cher Guevara', the famous picture of Che Guevara with Cher's face on it. We looked at a lot of his work and liked it. What I like about [the sleeve of *Home And Dry*] is that he's taken the words 'Pet Shop Boys' and made them really big. It's completely the opposite of what we've done in the rest of our career where we've always had really small type, or even just a sticker. He's filled the whole sleeve with real bold colours. It's good to make such a positive statement. It's like a statement of self-belief" – Chris Lowe

For *I Get Along*, the idea was to use ordinary provincial postcard images of urban parks



"What I like about *Home And Dry* is that he's taken the words 'Pet Shop Boys' and made them really big. It's completely the opposite of what we've done in the rest of our careers" **CHRIS LOWE**

Above left, the "less successful" Earl Brutus artwork; the Jimmy Somerville 'footballers' sleeve; and, below, King's 'automotive suicide pact' Earl Brutus sleeve



and Doncaster cruising areas. The song was, as I understood it, Neil pretending to be Peter Mandelson singing to Tony Blair, telling him he was OK after being 'exiled' to Hartlepool. We imagined these parks were the kind of places Mandelson might hang around. The sleeves were ready to go, but Neil then interviewed Mandelson for GQ magazine and liked him, so we didn't go with it. Luckily, I had an exhibition on at that time, Neil and Chris visited and loved a piece I'd created called *Self Portrait As A Catholic Pie Chart*, in which I document my personal loneliness across a series of brightly-coloured pie charts. So, we used these images and I re-wrote the text to fit the song. They were perfect, not influenced by Farrow at all, but I can see they may look like that, in this context.

"I think it's hilarious. It's a pie chart. You have the idea that the person singing the song isn't getting along, so he's got all these sad comments about how the internet's really great. They're all really lonely things" Neil Tennant

For the cover of *London*, which was only a single in Germany, I wanted to use something that represented the city. Pigeons are so ugly and scary that I felt it could work, so we went to a pigeon sanctuary run voluntarily by two sisters. There were hundreds of sick and deformed pigeons everywhere and a chicken running around. We chose three of the 'best' and took them back to London, where Jonathan de Villiers photographed them. It wasn't easy to get good shots between them crapping everywhere... and one of them losing a toe.

"Scott King was a different kind of designer, rougher. There are lots of jokes. He thought they were a very good symbol of London, pigeons in Trafalgar Square and all the rest of it. And I also think he liked the idea that there were mice in the video for Home And Dry, and now we had pigeons: these urban creatures" Neil Tennant

For the *Disco 3* sleeve I used a night time image of London by Wolfgang Tillmans. It's an image of this shiny New Labour cosmopolitan place. We tried to make the CD disc glitter, but it ended up being metallic. Still, I like

this sleeve... it does convey a kind of early 21st century modernity. It looks very much of its time now.

The last thing I worked on for them was the fan club Christmas card. I had no idea how important an institution they were. I suggested a camp anti-war protest that said 'Pet Shop Boys Say No To War, Yoo-Hoo & Merry Christmas'. I had it printed on this flimsy card and the fans hated it. They were used to lush Farrow designs and mine was the opposite. Neil likes the card, but I think the fact that so many fans didn't, perhaps made them go back to Farrow.

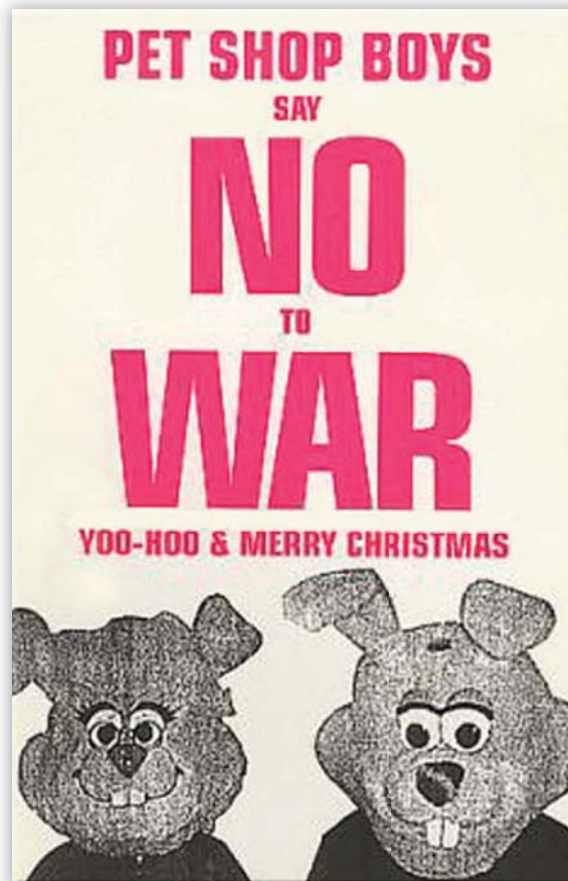
In 2003 you worked with Suede on the cover designs for *Singles* and *Attitude*.

How did that come about?

I'd been called in at the last minute when something that Wolfgang Tillmans and Peter Saville had been working on got rejected by the record company. Brett and Mat who didn't really know what I did or what they wanted. I suggested recreating their debut album's 'kissing' sleeve, but rather than making it slick or arty, we could use two teenage girls in shellsuits that looked like they were from a housing estate – a look that would, horribly, become known as 'chav'. They ended up just staring at each other; they couldn't kiss because the photographer had neglected to ask their age or inform them about the shoot, and they were too young. There was only one good image from the shoot, but the manager hated it so we ended up with this nondescript thing. Brett then scratched the title on to the photograph... and that was pretty much it.

In 2004 you worked with Morrissey on the cover of *You Are The Quarry*. How was it working with him?

I got a phone call saying "Morrissey wants you to design his next album cover" and that I should expect a photograph in the post. The 'tommy gun' image arrived with a reference to some old Sixties typeface and they asked me to put the two together. This completely threw me because they were offering me so much money to do so little work, and I knew I could come up with something much better. I spent three weeks trying to get them to use one of my ideas, but sadly they just wanted me to do as asked. There was



no direct communication with Morrissey but after I'd emailed the record company with an early design draft, I got a message saying "I'd prefer a rich cream colour to the, frankly, vile yellow you are using at the moment".

After Morrissey I worked with Roisin Murphy on the *Overpowered* album sleeve and its singles. We had our ups and downs, there was a lot of shouting, but in the end I was really happy working with her. She looked great and was very funny. The ideas where she appears in these incredible outfits in banal settings were based around my one-line brief of 'The Girl Who Fell To Wimpy Burger'. We imagined a contemporary take on Bowie from the mid-Seventies, relocated to a greasy spoon. These covers are all about Jonathan de Villiers' photographs, so I used a sticker – which is a great way to get out of being forced to do album cover typography, which always makes things look 'album covery'. It needed to look like something from a fashion magazine.

How satisfying is it creating for the music format, as opposed to art?

I love designing sleeves, and the art I've made about music comes from being a lifelong music fan, they're about my relationship to music. The idea that we are

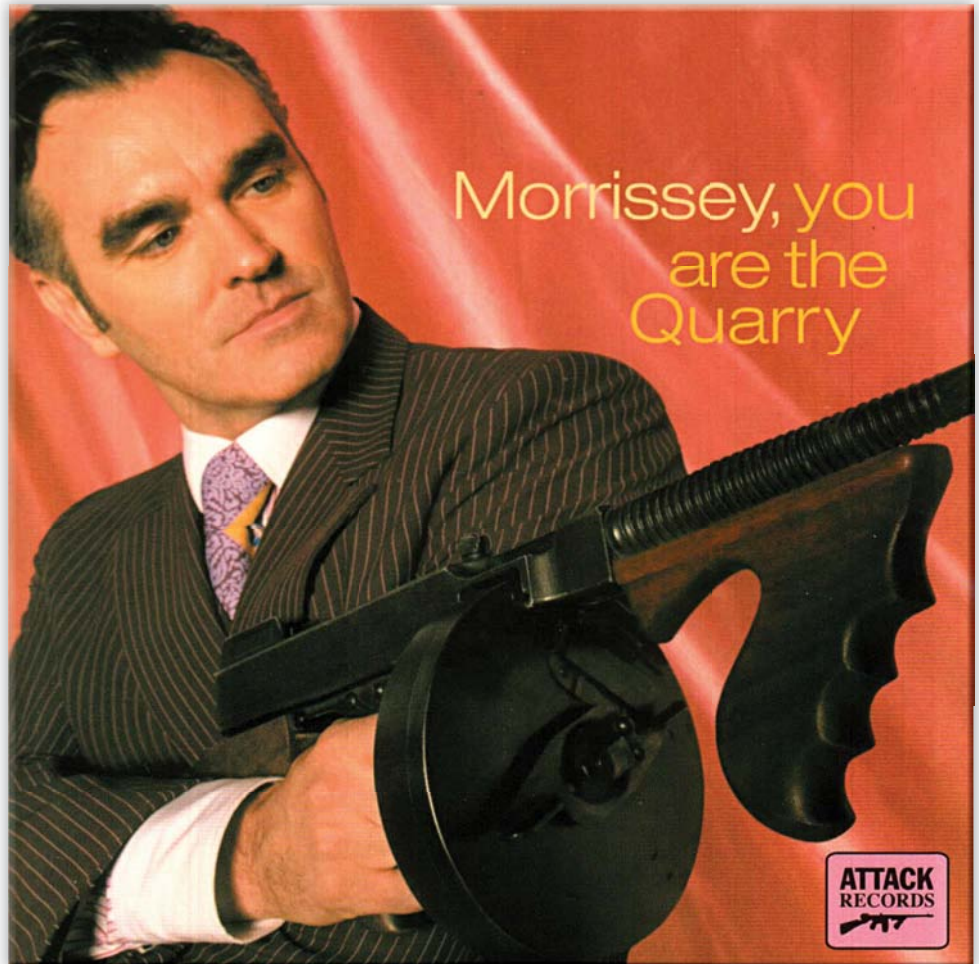
merely consumers of units, yet we have somehow accepted the mythologies created around the idea of 'the star' or 'the genius'. I'm excited by the fact that you can intellectualise, stand back and

see that The Music Industry is just this big unit-shifting machine, but simultaneously you cannot help but be drawn in, becoming a fan. I still consider pop music to be the highest form of art – not all of it, of course, but the idea of it.

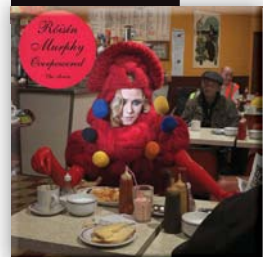
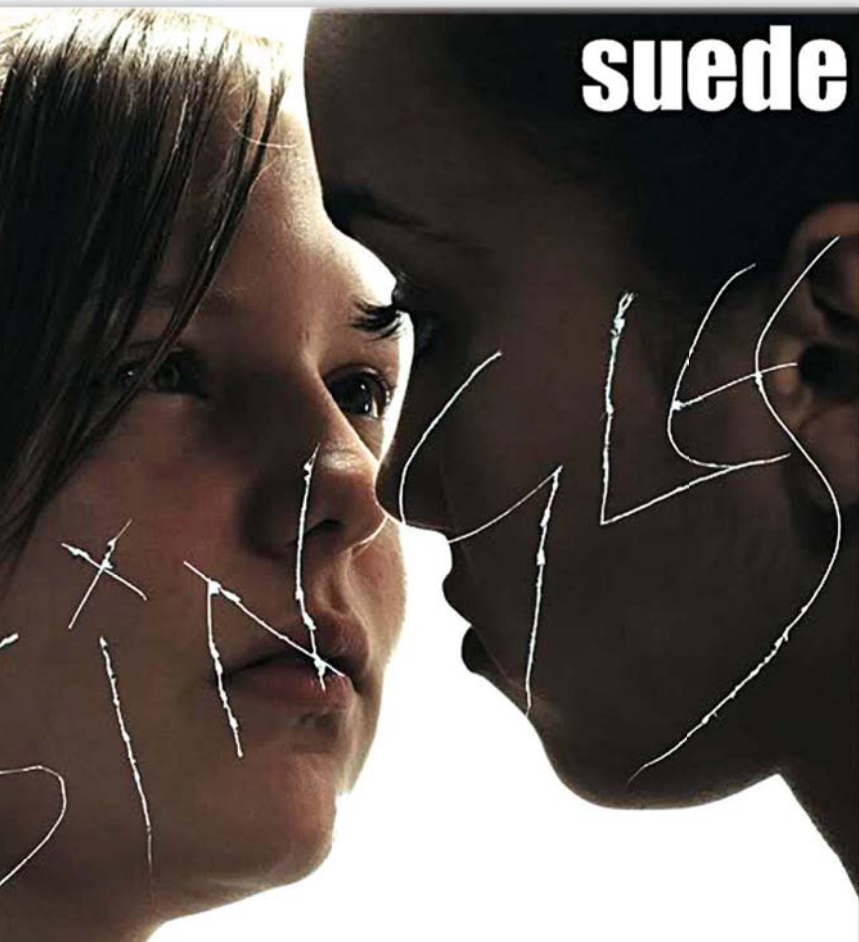
Which of all these designs are you most proud of?

It's probably Earl Brutus' *Tonight You Are The Special One* cover and their *CLOSED* box set. It was always a labour of love and they were great friends. I'm also proud of most of the designs for Pet Shop Boys. The most difficult sleeve I've ever had to design was for my own single *You're My Favourite Artist* – a parody and pastiche of an *Artforum* magazine review. It was torture, but it came out brilliantly in the end.

Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe quotations are taken from *Pet Shop Boys: Catalogue* by Philip Hoare & Chris Heath, published by Thames & Hudson. Hear Scott King's single at www.soundcloud.com/thevinylfactory/scott-king-youre-my-favourite and see his current work at www.scottking.co.uk ■



Above, You Are The Quarry for Morrissey ("it completely threw me") and, below, the Roisin Murphy *Overpowered* series of 2007



Under the skin

IN THIS EXTRACT FROM THE UPCOMING BOOK *JUST GOT LUCKY*, A WILTSHIRE LAD WHO TURNED POP SCRIBE AND DIVED HEADLONG INTO EIGHTIES LONDON CLUBLIFE REMEMBERS SOME REVEALING CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHARMING AND IRREPRESSIBLE BANANARAMA...

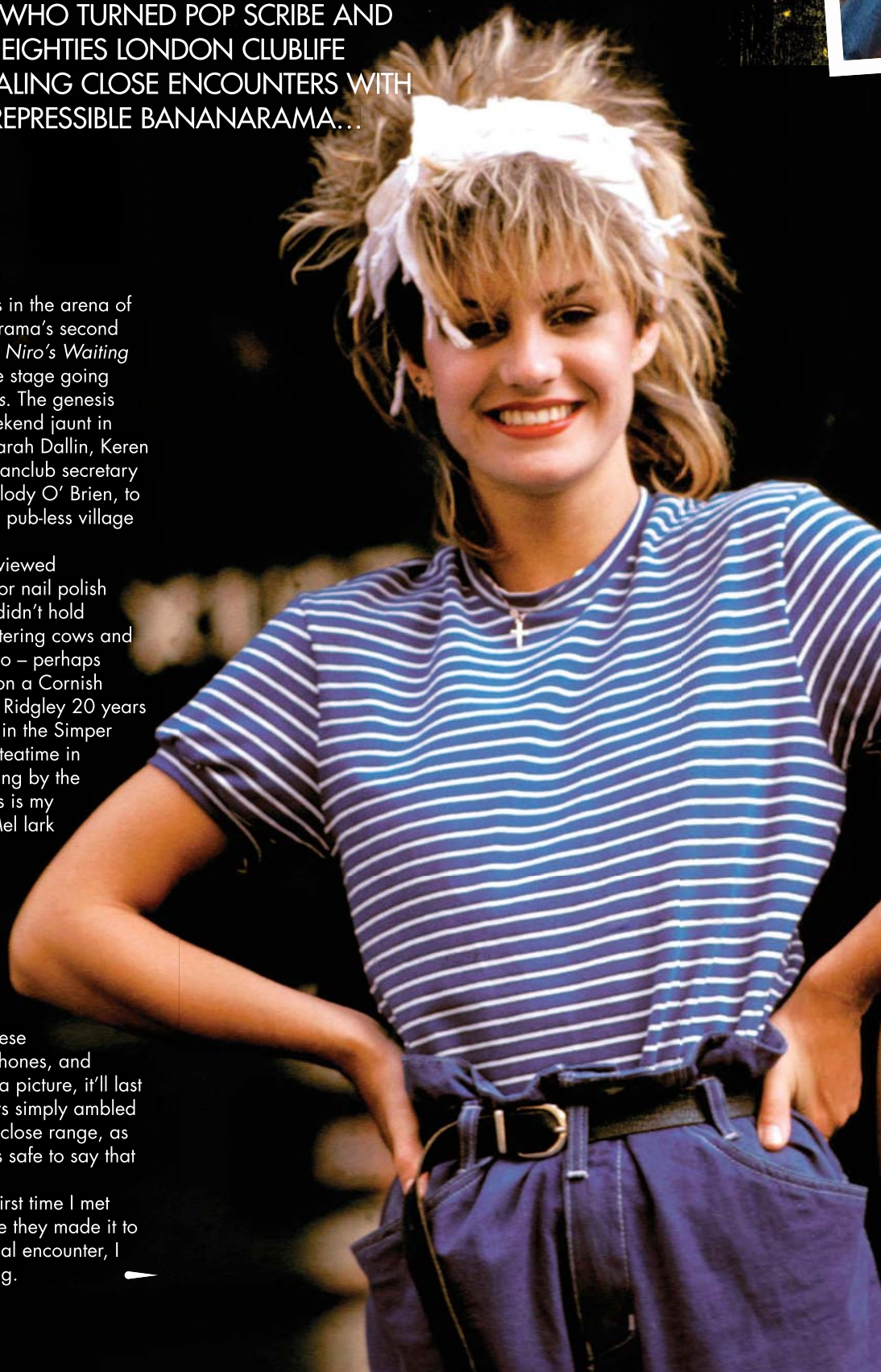
PAUL SIMPER

It is one of the lesser-known facts in the arena of Eighties pop music that Bananarama's second album – the one with *Robert De Niro's* *Waiting* and *Cruel Summer* – was at one stage going to be called *Tea At Mrs Simper's*. The genesis for this unlikely title lay in a weekend jaunt in January 1984 undertaken by Sarah Dallin, Keren Woodward and their best pal, fanclub secretary and honorary fourth 'Nana Miss Melody O' Brien, to my mum and dad's house in the tiny, pub-less village of East Grafton in Wiltshire.

It was a curious weekend. Mrs S viewed Bananarama's lack of skirts, lipstick or nail polish with suspicion, whilst the three girls didn't hold much truck with all the talk of slaughtering cows and shooting pheasants. It was Keren who – perhaps with a premonition of her future life on a Cornish country estate with Wham's Andrew Ridgley 20 years hence – appeared the most at home in the Simper country residence. A photo taken at teatime in the big sitting room shows her standing by the mantelpiece with an air of "Sure, this is my gaff, what of it?" while Sarah and Mel lark about with the family teapot.

A Saturday night trip to the closest pub, The Royal Oak in Wootton Rivers, proved equally uncomfortable, with the locals proving about as welcoming as Brian Glover and Rik Mayall in *An American Werewolf In London* when their game of darts is interrupted. These were the days long before camera-phones, and clearly unaware of the maxim "take a picture, it'll last longer", various welly-clad characters simply ambled over to inspect the girls at extremely close range, as you might a new breed of heifer. It is safe to say that the girls were not impressed.

Still, considering how poorly the first time I met Bananarama had gone, it's a miracle they made it to my mum and dad's at all. In that initial encounter, I could not have been more patronising.





Above: Girls go wild in the country. Keren, Sarah and pal Mel in deepest Wiltshire. Below: Tea at Mrs Simper's





POP UP Rolling Stone has credited the trio for inventing 'the New Wave girl group archetype'. "Somehow," they praised, "they managed to go through their whole career looking hot and bored at the same time"



By early '83 there had been a shift in attitude in the music press as far as Bananarama were concerned. After initially being welcomed as a breath of fresh air with their 'we just hopped on the dance floor and we're making it up as we go along' approach to being a girl group, their lack of polish had now been turned on its head and was being used against them. Their early sequence of hits, *It Ain't What You Do* (with Fun Boy Three), *Really Saying Something* and *Shy Boy* had been broken by the winsome ballad, *Cheers Then* (their first flop) and a so-so cover of Shocking Blue's *Na Na Hey Hey (Kiss Him Goodbye)* which had got them back in the charts, but not into the critics' hearts. In my capacity as a freelance writer for *Melody Maker* I had generally taken them to task for this and, more randomly, for the fact that they all smoked.

Thankfully my relocation to *No. 1* magazine shortly afterwards loosened the pole up my arse, and by the time of our next meeting for the release of *Cruel Summer* we were on a much more even keel.

Sitting in the summer sun outside London Records with our cappuccinos, it was a typically breezy, sarky and exceedingly camp 40 minutes covering fan encounters, disastrous TV appearances and some hairy home living experiences from their recently-acquired three-bedroom council flat which they now shared in Holborn. Some of this made it into the pages of *No. 1*, but plenty didn't. We'll go with what didn't.

The first subject to come up in conversation was a PA they'd done the previous weekend at Sheffield's local Top Rank, which had by all accounts gone down a storm. "You always panic with PAs that when you go out there's going to be no reaction, but they were really surging forward," enthused Keren. "They were all singing 'Na Na Hey Hey' and 'Get your tits out!'" Then they didn't even bother with the "Na Na Hey Heys". All three members of the group then burst into a rousing chorus of "Get your tits out" to the tune of *Na Na Hey Hey*.



"They were all singing 'Na Na Hey Hey' and 'Get your tits out'"

Keren, being the only single one at this time, received the most attention. "Someone said: 'You haven't got a boyfriend, have you?'" she said. "So they were all like: 'Phwoarr!'" When we went out the back afterwards they were all pretending it was their birthday so they could get a kiss."

The high point of the evening was a dance contest that the 'Nanas had been elected to judge before heading onto the dance floor for a bit of a boogie themselves.

"I had the DJ trying to do The Bump with me," said Keren, with a roll of the eyes. "I was so embarrassed. He put on *Ain't No Mountain High Enough* but he was awful. He kept missing all the beats. I had to just boogie backwards.

"But everyone was so excited about the night. They kept saying: 'There's never any trouble' —

here.' Then they all got beat up. The manager and the area manager came back and one of them had a closed eye and the other had a bloody nose and a split lip. Apparently the same happened when The Bluebells played there. They said the same thing to them: 'There's never any trouble here.'

The Bluebells and Bananarama had become good pals. Siobhan started dating songwriter/guitarist Robert Hodgins aka Bobby Bluebell soon afterwards, and their chart-topping *Young At Heart* first appears on Bananarama's debut album.

After our interview the girls were due to leave to attend a new Friday night music show, *Switch*, co-hosted by another pal of theirs, Capital Radio DJ Gary Crowley (Gary used to be the office boy at Decca Records when Siobhan was the receptionist). Talk of this got them thinking back to one of their earliest and most disastrous TV appearances on the late night adult version of *Tiswas*, *OTT* (tragically not available on YouTube).

"My God, what was that like?" marvelled Keren. "Did you ever see it? We've got it round at the flat. It is so out of tune. We're jumping up and down. We were paralytic."

"It was only our second ever TV show," said

Siobhan. "We just got stuck into the vodka. It was so embarrassing. That was in the days when we didn't have two halfpennies to rub together. We didn't have any clothes at all to do it in."

"Apart from our spotted catsuits!" howled Keren. "Polka dots. They were horrible."

Financially, Bananarama were still far from rolling in it. The dream was to one day buy a flat each (in a couple of years they would all buy houses next to each other in Kentish Town, like The Beatles) but at this point they'd have simply settled for a washing machine. "We tried to nick one out of the laundry the other day!" said Keren.

They were at least off the dole, and relations with their record company, London Records, sounded better than might have been expected. "We got no advances," explained Keren. "But they just let us get on with it. They've never suggested anything about what we wear. They just try to advise us on the records." Siobhan agreed: "They've actually always been quite good about us. I think they didn't expect much. We signed up without an advance. They thought of us as just a throwaway thing but then something happened, and since then they've been eating their words."

Initially Bananarama had been managed by The Boomtown Rats' manager Fachtna O'Kelly; later, the role would be taken by the immensely patient Hilary Shaw (who would eventually go on to manage the many entities of Girls Aloud), but at this point they were going it alone. Whoever was nominally 'in charge' of them, they were still very much marching to the beat of their own drum, even if that meant the odd altercation along the way.

"Razzamatazz [ITV's one afternoon pop show] won't have us on," said Siobhan. "I bet it was because we didn't crawl around the producers,"



Above: Keren, Paul Simper and George Michael. Right: a typically relaxed and impromptu photo opportunity

"We used to have to run round to the tube station to go to the toilet"

reckoned Keren. "Siobhan jumped on my back in the middle of the recording and we had to do it again. She went careering across the stage."

There had been talk, the band revealed, of them doing a pilot for their own TV show very much in the spirit of The Sour Grapes, the bunch of Sixties chicks on Hanna Barbera's *The Banana Splits*, who would freak the four Splits (Fleegle, Bingo, Drooper and Snorky) out with their cool shimmies. "I'm sure if we did a show as ourselves, no one would understand what we were laughing at," said Keren. "We come out with things that absolutely crack us up and no one else knows what we're on about. They all think we're laughing at them."

Funnily enough, this was one aspect of Bananarama that made me love them the most. Their tuts, eye rolls and bone-dry asides set them apart – often to the point of exclusion – from most of their contemporaries. Find a green room or bar backstage at any pop TV show and the chances were that Bananarama would be housed in one corner with a bottle of vodka, taking the piss. Partly it was their defence mechanism against a male-dominated industry, but there was also a healthy dose of dyed-in-the-wool punk ethic that had rubbed off on them from their time hanging out with the Sex Pistols, in particular Steve Jones and Paul Cook, whose rehearsal room on Denmark Street had been Sarah and Keren's (and sometimes Siobhan's) abode.

Tales of their rat-infested squat are legion. "There was a big pit outside our front door," recalled Keren.

POP UP Keren and Sarah met at the age of five at school in Bristol, and by 11 they were best friends. Moving to London, Keren nabbed a job in pensions at the BBC, while Sarah studied fashion





Geffy Images

"One night that started moving. We had all these old polystyrene relics from *The Great Rock And Roll Swindle* and they kept squeaking. I absolutely shit myself. It was so spooky there. It was pitch black, and nobody else lived round there. We got some tourists round to barge the door open and there was all these bloody skinheads hiding in the yard. One of them had got stuck in the pit.

"The pit was next to the outside toilet that didn't flush. We used to have to run round to the tube station [at Tottenham Court Road] to go to the toilet. At Denmark Street we didn't even have cold water when we first moved in. We had to go down and put a bucket under a dripping tap. We'd go down the Oasis [swimming baths on High Holborn, next to the *Melody Maker* offices] because they had hot baths down there. In between that we had to hang up a towel in our room and wash in a bowl

on the floor. I don't think I'd better go into any more details. It was horrible. It was so wet. I used to get up for work in the morning and my clothes would be sopping wet. No wonder I had a bad back."

The move to Babington Court – a council block adjacent to the one Spandau's manager Steve Dagger shared with his parents – was definitely a step up, but it was still not quite the pop palace you might have expected for chart regulars. The lift to the 11th floor, when it was actually working, permanently smelled of wee. Heating in the flat was provided by a modest bar grill electric fire in the front room, and phone calls were taken on a mounted pay phone in the hallway.

Their neighbours were also less than thrilled at the prospect of having future Guinness Book of Records holders (as the UK's most successful girl group) living amongst them – something that Keren discovered



Then and now:
in March 2016
the Bananarama
duo of Keren and
Sarah announced
a brand new deal
with BMG records

when she received a visit at four in the morning soon after they moved in. "Siobhan and her boyfriend Jim [Reilly, Stiff Little Fingers drummer] had been having one of their many arguments," recounted Keren, "so Sarah and Mel had turned the music up loud to drown them out. Then I heard this knocking on the door so I asked who it was. 'It's Bill from downstairs!' came the reply. The others hid, so I got up innocently to answer the door. 'Hello?'"

"Don't you hello me!"

"Sorry, what do you mean?"

"Don't give me that. You're joking, aren't you? That f***ing music blaring! My wife has to get up five o'clock every morning. I knew you were going to be trouble the minute you f***ing got in 'ere!"

"Sorry, I really don't know what you mean."

"Don't f***ing lie to me!" By this point he was waving his fists at me. 'I'm the f***ing chairman of the tenants' association. If you don't shut up then you're out of 'ere. Petitions. The lot.'"

The 'lot' did indeed include petitions – and a shotgun. On one occasion Jim Reilly had a firearm stuck in his face, and there was also an ongoing plan to burn down their front door.

"It's lucky they didn't burn the door down," said Keren drily. "There was no escape on the 11th floor. What were we going to do? Jump out the window? I was next to the washroom so I could have kicked the washroom window in and climbed round. What really worries me, though, is that I'm opposite the gas boiler. There was a huge explosion in the flats next door one morning. It was massive. I was stood by the window and I could feel it. The pressure from the explosion almost sucked me into it. But if that went, it'd just blow me straight out the window."

I became fairly well acquainted with Babington Court over the next couple of years as I started going out with Mel, who was every bit as sarky and funny and just as up for a night out as the other three. I say 'night out', but although the Nanas' prowess at drinking anyone under the table (even bands like Def Leppard) was legendary, they were just as happy sitting in front of the telly watching *Blind Date*, *That's Life* or *Brookside*, picking fault with whoever was on, all punctuated by riotous snorts of laughter.

Their favourite local was The Rugby, a tatty corner pub where they would take board games like Monopoly and Frustration to while away the hours listening to Tom Jones on the jukebox or being furnished with the odd bit of hooky gear for the flat. Indeed, as our *Cruel Summer* interview came to an

"It's lucky they didn't burn the door down. There was no escape"

end, Keren – in true Del Boy style – sweetly turned to me and offered to sort me out a new cut-price, no-questions-asked TV or video. "I'm not sure you should put that in the piece," she said, "but if there's anything you want, let us know!"

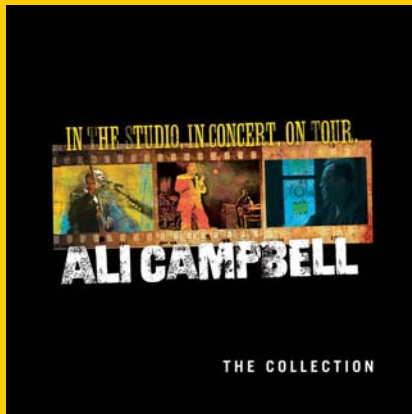
So, what happened to the album title *Tea At Mrs Simper's*? Despite much lobbying from the girls, the powers that be decided they wanted something more memorable. They called it *Bananarama*.

Go to <https://unbound.co.uk/books/>
just-got-lucky to pre-order Paul Simper's
upcoming memoir ■

POP UP Original Sex Pistols graffiti on the walls of the one-time Bananarama crashpad tucked away behind the guitar shop at 6, Denmark Street led to the building being granted listed status in 2016



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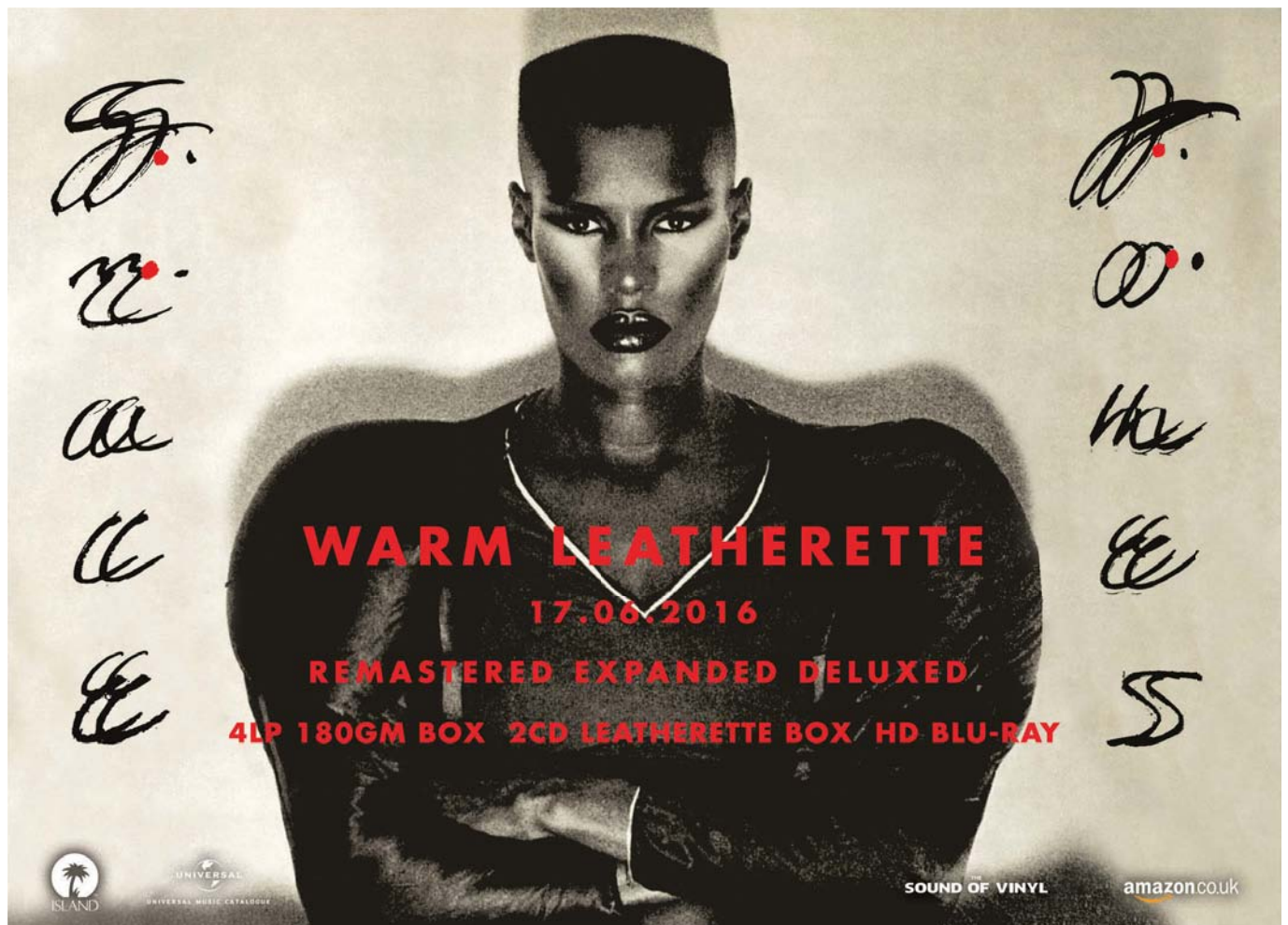
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GRACE JONES

WITH A NEW FILM AND A DELUXE EDITION OF HER CLASSIC LP *WARM LEATHERETTE* OUT THIS MONTH AND A NEW ALBUM "IN PROGRESS", THE INIMITABLE MISS GRACE JONES IS BACK TO SNARE THE COPYCATS AND INJECT SOME MUCH-NEEDED ORIGINALITY.

MARK
LINDORES

In the four decades that Grace Jones has basked in the glare of the public eye, she has been a model, singer, actress, artist, muse, provocateur, songwriter, art subject and author, inhabiting each role as if it were simply yet another outrageous piece of designer fashion – something she wears like no other.

Entirely her own creation, Beverly Grace Jones was born in Spanish Town, Jamaica in 1948 and was raised by her grandmother and step-grandfather Mas P. A strict disciplinarian, Mas P ruled Beverly and her siblings with a brutal instillation of fear and control (she later described his menacing glare as "the all-seeing-eye" and adopted it herself as her signature during her tough androgynous phase in the early Eighties).

Leaving Jamaica to live with her parents in Syracuse, New York at the age of 14, Beverly made the nominal change to Grace and began experimenting with fashion and make-up, triggering her evolution to the larger-than-life icon the world now recognises her as. Four years later she moved to New York City to pursue her dream of becoming a model.

A transformative time for the city as well as Grace, she felt at home in newly-liberated gay clubs and the decadent nightspots that served as the foundation for disco. Grace's luminescent, exotic beauty saw her become a muse for fashion designers and photographers, taking her to Paris and back. Her voracious love of New York's nightlife established her as a major figure on the club scene and landed her a record deal and a role as the "Queen of gay discos" thanks to her performance art PA's to promote underground anthems such as *I Need A Man*. By 1979, disco was over and a reinvention was in order. The brief for Grace's new direction was a copy of the *New York Times* featuring the now iconic *Island Life* cover image, and with it came the brief to "make it sound like what that looks like".

Almost 40 years later, Grace has released 10 studio albums, starred in countless films, appeared on thousands of magazine covers and written a best-selling autobiography, moving seamlessly from music to film, art to fashion and beyond, her potent influence continuing to infiltrate all areas of pop culture. Ladies and gentlemen: Miss Grace Jones.

THE MUST-HAVE ALBUMS



WARM LEATHERETTE

1980

Feel the steering wheel

Having established herself as a disco diva and gay icon with her first three albums, 1980's *Warm Leatherette* marked a musical rebirth for Grace. Having signed to Island Records, flown to the Bahamas and teamed up with producers Chris Blackwell, Alex Sadkin and Sly & Robbie, Grace's new direction was deeply rooted in her homeland of Jamaica for an album which incorporated reggae, new wave, dub, funk and soul.

Interpretations of songs by The Pretenders (*Private Life*), The Normal (*Warm Leatherette*), Smokey Robinson (*The Hunter Gets Captured By The Game*) and Roxy Music (*Love Is The Drug*) were unrecognisable from the originals and fitted perfectly alongside Grace's co-write *A Rolling Stone*, stamped as they are in Grace's inimitable style, her menacing, languid vocal personalising each track. Aside from Grace's musical transition, the album marked the beginning of her professional and personal relationship with Jean-Paul Goude, who photographed her for the cover, casting her as a tough androgynous, confidently glaring out from the album cover. The album was Grace's first to make an impact in the UK, peaking at No. 45.



NIGHTCLUBBING

1981

Brand new people

The second of Grace's Compass Point trilogy, *Nightclubbing* cemented her position as a pop culture tour-de-force. Taking its cues from *Warm Leatherette* and filing off the rough edges, *Nightclubbing* was a sleek, polished record, its exotic soundscapes proving the perfect backdrop for Grace's moody intonation. It saw her achieve commercial success without compromise.

The record also highlighted Grace's growing confidence in her songwriting, contributing to three songs on the album, including monster hit, the innuendo-laden *Pull Up To The Bumper*. Other highlights include the Bowie/Iggy Pop-penned title track *Walking In The Rain*, *Feel Up* (written solely by Grace), *I've Seen That Face Before* (*Libertango*), Sting's *Demolition Man* and an astonishing take on Bill Withers' *Use Me*.

Having established a niche for genre-bending in her music, the cover image of Grace in an Armani jacket, flattop haircut and cigarette dangling from her lips became one of the definitive images of her. Again shot by collaborator Jean-Paul Goude, the cover perfectly encapsulated the menacing androgyny for which she would be renowned.



SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM

1985

Never stop the action

Having reached the end of her contract with Island Records after 1982's *Living My Life*, Grace took a sabbatical from music to launch her film career with turns in *Conan The Destroyer* opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger and as the Bond villain May Day in *A View To A Kill*. Her spectacular return to music at the end of 1984 was to be her most avant-garde project to date.

Originally earmarked for Frankie Goes To Hollywood, the concept of *Slave To The Rhythm*, taking the genesis of a single song and reinterpreting it into different styles and arrangements, was a huge success for Grace, with her deadpan vocal delivery the perfect accompaniment to Trevor Horn's stellar production and state-of-the-art experimentation. Snippets of an interview with Grace by Paul Morley were interwoven throughout the album, earning it the subtitle "a biography" (30 years later they reunited to write her autobiography).

Slave To The Rhythm was as much an art project as it was an album. It was one of the first multimedia packages, with a cut-and-paste sensibility running cohesively through the music, videos and the artwork.



HURRICANE

2008

Force of nature

Nineteen years after her last studio album, Grace made a triumphant return with 2008's *Hurricane*. After proclaiming to "never record an album again", she recorded sporadically in the previous two decades, mainly songs for film soundtracks. She changed her mind after meeting producer Ivor Guest, with whom she developed a strong songwriting partnership.

Having assembled a team including Brian Eno, Tricky and a reunion with Sly & Robbie, Grace set about creating a modern sound, drawing on her own early Eighties output and the music it in turn had influenced such as Massive Attack and Tricky.

While forward-thinking sonically, *Hurricane* was largely retrospective lyrically. Having celebrated her 60th birthday, Grace produced an intensely personal work, looking back to her childhood in Jamaica for album standouts such as *Williams' Blood* and *I'm Crying* (*Mother's Tears*). Vulnerability aside, she briefly reprises the androgynous cyborg of her Eighties heyday for *Corporate Cannibal*. With nods to former glories while remaining a contemporary sounding record, *Hurricane* not only celebrated her musical legacy but is also a worthy addition to it.

AND THE REST...



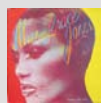
Portfolio

1977

Already renowned as a model and socialite thanks

to her outrageous appearances at New York's hottest nightclubs, most notably Studio 54, Grace signed to Island Records with the intention of putting the music to the face. Working with famed disco producer Tom Moulton, Grace's debut album was recorded specifically for the clubs – Side 1 of the album came ready-sequenced, while Broadway showtunes such as *Send In The Clowns*, *Tomorrow* and *What I Did For Love* were revamped to provide apt theatrics for Grace's legendary club PA's.

A cover of Piaf's *La Vie En Rose* and two Grace co-writes rounded out the album before the rousing finale of *I Need A Man*, a call-to-arms anthem which earned the singer an ardent gay fanbase that has remained loyal ever since. Though not a big commercial hit, the album was the perfect introduction to Grace.



Muse

1979

The third and final album of Grace's disco trilogy, *Muse* is widely regarded as Grace's 'lost album' due to it not being released on CD until as late as 2015.

Like its predecessors *Portfolio* and *Fame*, *Muse* was again brilliantly produced by Tom Moulton and heavily draws from the great Philly soul sound. Also like those albums, *Muse* followed the formula of a segued Side 1 with individual tracks on Side 2 and featured cover art by Richard Bernstein – the artist who created the covers of Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine.

Despite being maybe the best album of Grace's disco period (*Sinners*, *On Your Knees* and *Don't Mess With The Messer* are among her best dance tracks), *Muse* suffered by being released at the very height of the "disco sucks" backlash. It peaked at No. 156 in the US and failed to produce a hit single.

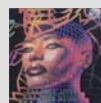


Living My Life

1982

Following the success of *Nightclubbing*, Grace

returned to Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas with the same team of producers and musicians with whom she had collaborated on her previous two albums. Buoyed by the reception to those albums, a confident Grace decided that *Living My Life* should be all original material and wrote or co-wrote every track – with the exception of one cover, Melvin Van Peebles' *The Apple Stretching*. Once again incorporating a reggae-inflected sound, *Living My Life* drew from the same sonic palette as *Nightclubbing* though did seem to head in a more pop direction, particularly on the polished *Cry Now*, *Laugh Later* and *Unlimited Capacity For Love*. Having produced two of Grace's greatest hits, *Nipple To The Bottle* and *My Jamaican Guy*, the album became her biggest album to date, reaching No. 15 on the album chart.



Inside Story

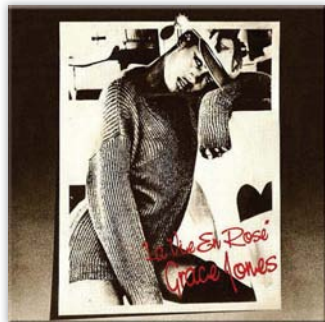
1986

The mid-Eighties was undoubtedly Grace's most prolific period; it was certainly a veritable feast for her fans. *Slave To The Rhythm* was followed by the *Island Life* compilation, Grace's image was used on MTV, mag covers and car commercials and she had also appeared in *A View To A Kill* and the campy horror flick *Vamp*.

Trading on her peak popularity, Grace embraced a pop/dance sound for 1986's *Inside Story* with traces of gospel and jazz. Enlisting old clubbing-cohort-turned-man-of-the-moment Nile Rodgers to produce, Grace wrote the entire album with Bruce Woolley.

Despite the release of four singles, *I'm Not Perfect* (*But I'm Perfect For You*), *Party Girl* and *Crash* as well as the ill-judged Victor *Should Have Been A Jazz Musician*, *Inside Story* wasn't a big hit. With this album, the multi-faceted icon was too weird for the mainstream and too pop for the purists.

THE ESSENTIAL SINGLES



LA VIE EN ROSE

1977

Pretty in pink

Released as the third and final single from the *Portfolio* album in 1977, Grace described *La Vie En Rose* as very special to her as it reminds her of her “many French lovers”.

Producer Tom Moulton had recorded a bossa nova version of the 1946 Edith Piaf standard with long-forgotten singer Teresa Wiaters which was a huge hit in gay discos such as 12 West, where Grace regularly performed. On hearing the song, Grace begged him to let her record it instead, claiming she was “big in France” and it would be a bigger hit.

Her instinct proved to be right and the single gave Grace her first taste of commercial success, becoming a Top 10 hit throughout Europe. It reached its UK peak of No. 12 in 1985 when it was released as a double A-side with *Pull Up To The Bumper* to promote the *Island Life* compilation.



I'VE SEEN THAT FACE BEFORE (LIBERTANGO)

1981

Footsteps in the dark

Grace found one of her most seductive songs by taking Astor Piazzolla's 1974 instrumental *Libertango* and juxtaposing it over a brooding reggae rhythm – yet the lyrics, written by Grace with Barry Reynolds, are very dark, dealing with the sinister underbelly of the Parisian nightlife and an encounter with a stalker. “What are you looking for?” Grace sings in French. “Hoping to find love? Who do you think you are? You hate your life.” Actress Nathalie Delon, Chris Blackwell's girlfriend, helped Grace to translate her lyrics. Grace credited her performance to Compass Point Studios: “It was there that I really found my voice,” Grace said of her deep, gender non-specific delivery. The song's underlying drama made it perfect to soundtrack a pivotal scene in Roman Polanski's film *Frantic*.



PULL UP TO THE BUMPER

1981

Long black limousine

One of Grace's biggest hits and best-known tracks almost didn't come to fruition. The instrumental track had originally been written by Sly & Robbie in 1980 during the *Warm Leatherette* sessions but was discarded by Chris Blackwell for being too ‘R&B sounding’ for the album. The track later surfaced as *Peanut Butter*, the B-side to Junior Tucker's 1981 single *The Kick (Rock On)*, before Grace insisted she have it back. Along with Dana Mano and Koo Koo Baya, Grace wrote the suggestive lyrics; “Pull up to my bumper baby, in your long black limousine. Pull up to my bumper baby, drive it in between,” is all fairly self-explanatory.

The controversy limited radio play, however, and the song peaked at No. 53. Its re-release in 1985 saw it reach No. 12 and become one of her biggest hits.



MY JAMAICAN GUY

1983

Never holding back

Having made the decision that *Living My Life* should consist of mostly original material after her previous albums of largely covers, *My Jamaican Guy* is a landmark record in Grace's discography as it is her first single which she wrote by herself.

Although she didn't reveal at the time who the inspiration for the song was, in 2010 she explained that the song was in fact inspired by a fantasy she had about Tyrone Downie, the keyboard player from Bob Marley's The Wailers, after seeing him emerge from a swimming pool in Nassau and shaking his dreadlocks free of water, which she described as being “like an animal”. Grace never disclosed that the song was about him at the time out of respect for him being in a relationship. The song has been sampled a number of times by various artists including La Roux and LL Cool J.



SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM

1985

Sparks will fly

Grace returned in 1985 with her most experimental track to date. Written by Bruce Woolley for Frankie Goes To Hollywood, the song was rewritten and given to Grace to launch her comeback instead. At a cost of over £350,000 and with a timeframe of over nine months, the track grew into a concept album. “I remember a huge amount of experimentation with the Synclavier, Sony digital tape spliced with sticky tape, and the Fairlight,” Bruce Woolley says. “We recorded a new version every four weeks, with Horn and Blackwell in search of the perfect track.” The song is called *Ladies And Gentlemen: Miss Grace Jones* on the album, much to the confusion of fans. Reaching No. 12 on the singles chart, it remains her biggest UK hit.



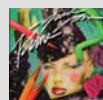
WILLIAMS' BLOOD

2008

Thicker than water

Grace's return with *Hurricane*, her first album since 1989's *Bulletproof Heart*, proved to be a revelation. Her 60th birthday had prompted reflection and that profoundly inspired her writing, and a collaboration with Wendy & Lisa resulted in one of her greatest songs. *Williams' Blood* examined Grace's bloodline and traits which she had inherited from her mother's more liberal side of the family (Williams was her mother's maiden name) and lamenting her father's strict disciplinarian side. On the song, Grace also credits her mother for her musical genetics. Marjorie sang backup on this and on *My Jamaican Guy*, though she wanted to remain uncredited from the latter for fear of upsetting the pastor of her church.

ONLY FOR THE BRAVE



Fame

1978

Hastily released to capitalise on her celebrity as the Queen Of Disco, *Fame* followed the same formula as *Portfolio*, but lacked its spark. Released just nine months later, with the exception of *Do Or Die* and *Autumn Leaves*, it sounded like a rushed re-tread.



Bulletproof Heart

1989

Bulletproof Heart, produced with husband Chris Stanley, Robert Cliviles and David Cole, sounded rather like a desperate attempt to take her back to the clubs. Overproduced, the album is the most dated of Grace's discography.



NEED TO KNOW

● Grace's autobiography, entitled *I'll Never Write My Memoirs* after a line in her 1981 song *Art Groupie*, is an astonishingly frank, funny and salacious read. “A book is intimate, which is why it has covers,” she explains. “It's like sex – I'm doing it under the covers. If you do go under the covers, don't be outraged at what you find.”

● Grace stole the show during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Concert when she performed *Slave To The Rhythm* complete with her trademark hula-hooping routine.

● Grace's biggest disappointment regarding her successful film career is turning down the lead role in *Blade Runner* on the advice of her partner Jean-Paul Goudé.

● Grace is renowned for her outrageous appearances. A 1998 performance at Disneyland earned her a lifetime ban from all Disney theme parks after she bared her breasts during her act, while her infamous 1985 appearance on Russell Harty's chat show in which she slapped him for turning his back on her to speak to another guest is TV gold.

THE MUST-WATCH VIDEOS

SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM

DIRECTOR: JEAN-PAUL GOUDE

It would be practically impossible to imagine Grace's career without photographer Jean-Paul Goude's contribution. His iconic photographs and videos of her are integral to her visual identity.

The *Slave To The Rhythm* video is pretty much a 'greatest hits' of their artistic alliance, piecing together their most memorable images and video clips from *My Jamaican Guy*, *I've Seen That Face Before (Libertango)* and *Living My Life* (the infamous suicide scene of Grace shooting herself in the head) as well as the Citroën CX TV ad and *A One Man Show* concert, interspersed with his trademark postmodernism fantasies.

The opening scene, with a razor blade and a polaroid of Grace, showed the creation of the *Slave To The Rhythm* album cover. The video lost to Whitney Houston's *How Will I Know* for Best Female Video at the 1986 MTV Video Music Awards.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0XLzswl2s>

I'M NOT PERFECT (BUT I'M PERFECT FOR YOU)

DIRECTOR: KEITH HARING

With her striking beauty and beginnings as a model, it was inevitable that Jones would find herself described as a muse to a host of designers and artists, including Yves Saint Laurent, Andy Warhol and Keith Haring — and it was her artistic partnership with Haring that was celebrated in the video for *I'm Not Perfect (But I'm Perfect For You)*.

Having been close friends since their early days in New York, Grace and Keith had also worked together. He turned her into a human canvas when he body-painted her for a club appearance and for her role as Queen Katrina in the film *Vamp*. As well as directing the video, Keith appeared in it, painting a 60-ft dress which Grace is seen in as the video ends. The end result was highly influential, and Rihanna paid homage to Grace's Haring-created tribal aesthetic in her *Rude Boy* video in 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hl5oonDCUvk>

CORPORATE CANNIBAL

DIRECTOR: NICK HOOKER

For her first video in almost two decades, Grace enlisted the services of director Nick Hooker, having been a fan of his work on U2's *Vertigo* Tour. Hooker was given a copy of the *Hurricane* album to listen to and was asked which song he wanted to create a visual for. Once he had chosen *Corporate Cannibal*, he was given complete artistic control of the concept. The stark, black-and-white, digitally distorted focus of Grace from the shoulders up was totally contemporary while evoking vintage Grace (the stretching of her head is almost a tech-enhanced update of the *Slave To The Rhythm* cover).

"There's a misunderstanding about Grace that she's just a sort of lump of clay in the hands of these Svengali types, that her work is really their work and that's completely wrong," says Nick. "She's a very savvy, smart, sophisticated artist who really knows what she's doing."

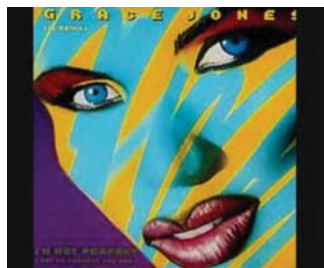
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgMn20Jmx3w>

A ONE MAN SHOW

DIRECTOR: JEAN-PAUL GOUDE

Along with *Stop Making Sense* and *Sign O' The Times*, *A One Man Show* is the definitive concert film of the Eighties. Redefining the medium of the pop concert, Grace and Goude collaborated to bring their art to life, resulting in a multimedia extravaganza steeped in art, style and sophistication. "It was like the invention of a new genre, related to the musical, to opera, to circus, to cinema, to documentary, to the art gallery", Grace wrote in her autobiography *I'll Never Write My Memoirs*. "It was about rejecting normal, often quite sentimental and conventionally crowd-pleasing ways of projecting myself as a black singer and female entertainer, because those ways had turned into clichés, which kept me pent up in a cage. I wanted to jolt the adult world that is traditionally left bland by white men, to shatter certain kinds of smugness through performance and theatre."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHClmfexXZs>



"There's a misunderstanding that Grace is a sort of lump of clay in the hands of these Svengali types, that her work is really theirs. She's a very savvy, smart, sophisticated artist who really knows what she's doing" — Nick Hooker

WHAT'S NEXT?

Grace is continuing work on an African/Tribal themed album tentatively titled *Shenanigans* and has live festival appearances lined up throughout the summer, including Love Supreme in Sussex in July. In the meantime, she is continuing to collaborate with Sophie Fiennes, who is directing a documentary.

Entitled *Grace Jones: The Musical Of My Life*, the film is due in the autumn and will be "a cinematic journey into the private and public worlds of Grace Jones, mixing

intimate personal footage with unique staged musical sequences."

In more film news, Grace is starring in *Gutterdammerung*, "the loudest silent movie ever made", alongside Iggy Pop, Slash, Josh Homme and Lemmy. Released this summer, the film will tour festivals and play while live acts provide a soundtrack. Grace stars as the Gatekeeper to Purgatory: "Imagine her like Cleopatra in a big chair giving the thumbs up or the thumbs down," says director Bjorn Tagermose.

GRACE IS WORKING ON AN ALBUM TENTATIVELY ENTITLED *SHENANIGANS* AND HAS FESTIVAL APPEARANCES LINED UP THROUGH THE SUMMER



LISTEN UP!

Outrageous, uninhibited and without question a truly original artist: here's our Grace Jones Spotify playlist...

1 **Pull Up To The Bumper**
Disco bound

2 **Ladies And Gentlemen: Miss Grace Jones**
Slave... in disguise

3 **My Jamaican Guy**
Secret crush

4 **Warm Leatherette**
The Normal become abnormal

5 **Walking In The Rain**
Shining in the light

6 **Williams' Blood**
A stone cold Jones classic

7 **Private Life**
Reggae and drama

8 **I've Seen Your Face Before (Libertango)**
From *Nightclubbing*

9 **La Vie En Rose**
Édith Piaf reimagined

10 **I Need A Man**
The best of *Portfolio?*

11 **Do Or Die**
First single from *Fame*

12 **Nipple To The Bottle**
Big beat

13 **Love Is The Drug**
Grace takes on Roxy

14 **Nightclubbing**
Written by Bowie and Iggy

15 **Use Me**
'Til you've used me up

16 **Demolition Man**
Sting-penned single

17 **Feel Up**
A Grace original

18 **Don't Mess With The Messer**
Disco from the *Muse* album

19 **Living My Life**
1983 single

20 **Corporate Cannibal**
Anti-capitalist rant from *Hurricane*

21 **I'm Not Perfect (But I'm Perfect For You)**
Opening gambit from *Inside Story*

22 **She's Lost Control**
B-side and Joy Division cover

<http://spotify.fi/1SZB5fb>



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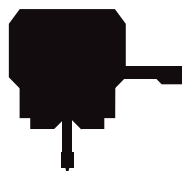
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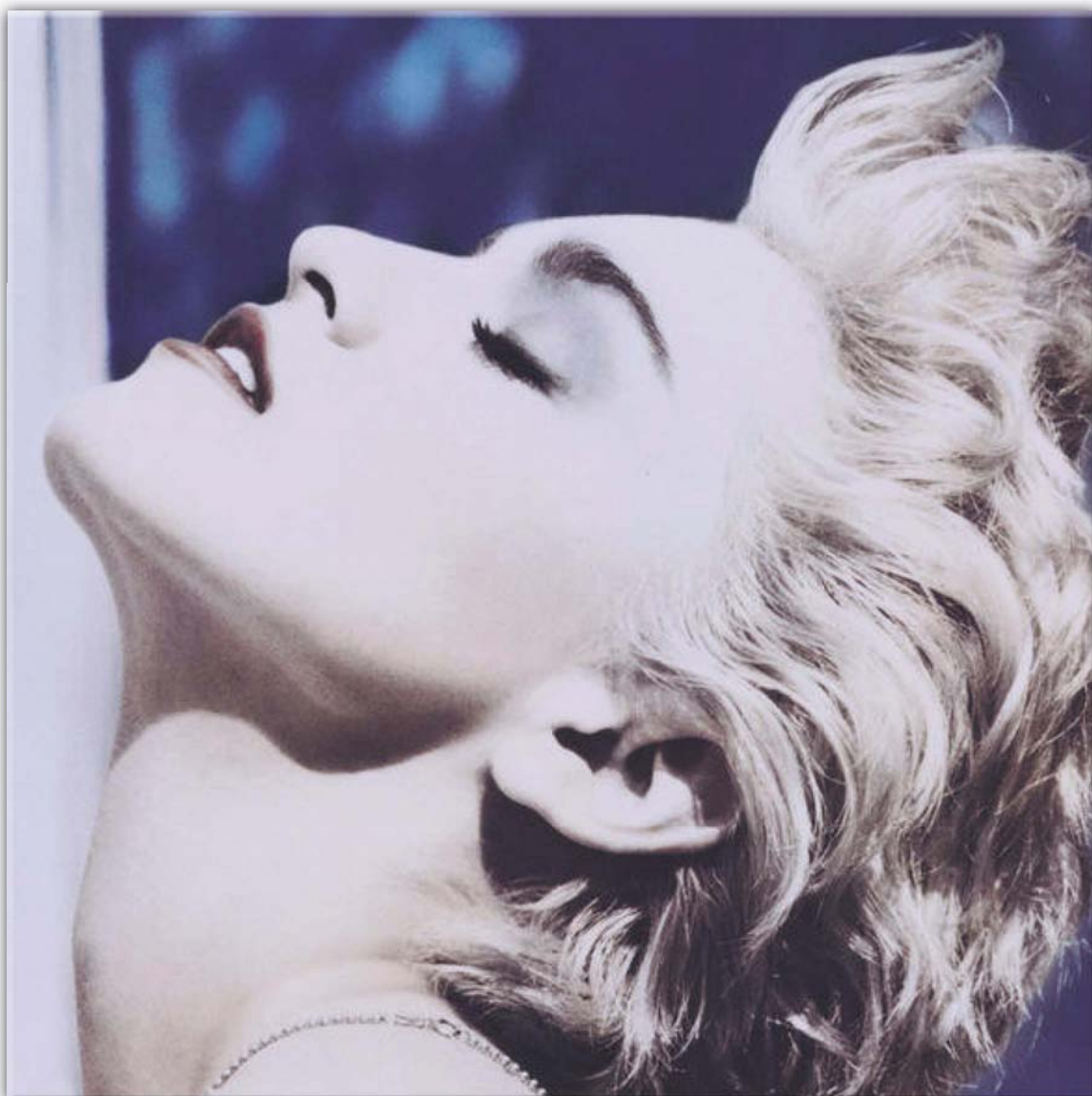
ALBUM

TRUE BLUE

MADONNA

WITH GLOBAL SUCCESS FIRMLY UNDER HER BOY TOY BELT, A NEWLY-WED MADONNA SPENT THE LATTER HALF OF 1985 WORKING ON HER THIRD ALBUM. LOVED-UP AND TONED-DOWN, SHE RETURNED WITH THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ALBUM OF HER CAREER...

MARK LINDORES



Given that she has become as renowned for her unwavering strength, determination and resilience almost as much as she has for her extraordinary career, it's hard to believe that Madonna has admitted that she found the magnitude of her initial success unsettling, despite the seemingly ruthless ambition she portrayed at the time.

The pop behemoth that was 1984's *Like A Virgin* album had propelled her to a level of fame where her every movement or utterance was debated, scrutinised and misunderstood. Frustrated that she was in trouble (deep) of overexposure (yes, really), Madonna made a conscious effort to take herself out of the limelight following Live Aid in July 1985 and, with her wedding to actor Sean Penn imminent, to re-evaluate the direction in which her life and career were heading.

"That whole time was almost too much," she later told *Rolling Stone*. "After

Madonna channelling Jean Seberg in the T-shirt she wore in the *Papa Don't Preach* video



Getty Images

TRACK BY

1 PAPA DON'T PREACH

Released in June 1986, *Papa Don't Preach* was described by Madonna as "a message song that everyone is going to take the wrong way", foreseeing the pro-life controversy. As well as slight lyrical changes to the original Brian Elliot composition, Madonna included a dramatic strings intro as a nod to *As Good As New* from Abba's *Voulez Vous*, an album she had fallen in love with while living in Paris in 1979 while working on disco singer Patrick Hernandez's production team.

2 OPEN YOUR HEART

Based on a demo of a rock track called *Follow Your Heart*, which writers Gardner Cole and Peter Rafelson had earmarked for Cyndi Lauper, *Open Your Heart* was transformed by Madonna and Pat Leonard into a pop/dance track with a driving bassline. The song was the first recorded for the album in December 1985 and released as the fourth single a year later. As well as having Madonna's sexiest video to date, it also boasted one of her greatest 12" remixes, particularly her feisty ad-libs at the end of the song, where she taunts the object of her desire. Clocking in at 10:35, the extended mix was chosen as the opener to the *Who's That Girl* Tour in 1987.

3 WHITE HEAT

The first of *True Blue*'s tributes to silver screen icons, *White Heat* also included samples of dialogue from the 1949 James Cagney movie of the same name. With tongue placed firmly in cheek, Madonna hammed it up in campy femme fatale fashion ("My love is dangerous") and referencing the gangster flicks of the Forties, purring such well-known lines as "This is a bust" and "Come on baby, make my day".

4 LIVE TO TELL

Live To Tell introduced Madonna's moody, confessional side and silenced many of her critics who had her pigeonholed as a purveyor of throwaway bubblegum pop tracks. The mature, haunting ballad was such a departure that her record company balked when she insisted on releasing it as the album's first single, deeming it commercial suicide. Keen to show another side of herself, and proud to be performing the theme to Sean's movie *At Close Range*, Madonna was vindicated when the song reached No. 1 in the US and became a Top 10 hit around the world. Although the song's meaning has never been revealed (the lyrics have been interpreted as hinting at abuse or infidelity), Madonna has said the song is "true but not necessarily autobiographical". A firm

fan favourite, the song has long held extra meaning for many of Madonna's gay fans who have found the song resonates with their experiences of coming out.

5 WHERE'S THE PARTY

Much to their disdain, Madonna and Sean found themselves the focal point of the world's paparazzi following their wedding in 1985. Sean's vitriol frequently led to violence, while Madonna chose to vent her frustration in song. The album's most danceable song, its infectious groove belied its demeanour. "Where's The Party is my ultimate reminder to myself that I want to enjoy life and not let the press get to me, because every once in a while it does," she told the *New York Times*. "It's about what it's like with everybody on my back and feeling like my world is about to cave in."

6 TRUE BLUE

An unabashed love song for Sean, *True Blue*'s saccharine title track is an underrated pop gem. Long abandoned due to its inextricable link to her marriage, the song – influenced by her love of Motown, doo-wop and Sixties girl groups – has been reintroduced into Madonna's career as she has re-established a friendship with Sean, and a charming ukulele version provided one of the highlights of last year's Rebel Heart Tour.

7 LA ISLA BONITA

After being turned down by Michael Jackson, Pat Leonard played a demo of the song to Madonna who wrote the lyrics about "the beautiful island" over Pat and Bruce Gaitsch's instrumental, resulting in her fourth UK No. 1. Inspired by the salsa and merengue music she had heard in New York, Madonna described it as her tribute to the "beauty and mystery of Latin American people".

8 JIMMY JIMMY

The album's weakest track and the only song never to have been performed live, *Jimmy Jimmy* was again a girl-group pastiche inspired by Madonna's teenage fixation with James Dean. "I used to fantasise that we grew up in the same neighbourhood and that he moved away and became a big star," she said. With a lyric about a girl's infatuation with the town's bad boy, it held resonance with Madonna's relationship with Sean.

9 LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND

This cliché-ridden attempt at a protest song was an early fruit of the on-tour Madonna and Pat Leonard songwriting partnership. Originally mooted as a possible lead single to *True Blue*, the song's only live airing was during Live Aid, accompanied by Nile Rodgers and Thompson Twins.

THE PLAYERS

Getty Images



STEPHEN BRAY

Friends from Detroit, Madonna and Stephen formed a band in New York called Emmy, which cemented their songwriting partnership. Together they created hits such as *Into The Groove*, *Causing A Commotion* and *Express Yourself*. They fell out after Stephen released *Pre-Madonna*, a compilation of demos from their early days in New York. He recently wrote the Broadway musical *The Color Purple*.



PAT LEONARD

One of Madonna's most prolific collaborators, Pat was hired as the musical director of The Virgin Tour. It was during the tour he began writing with Madonna. After *True Blue* established him as a songwriter/producer, he also worked on Madonna's *Who's That Girl*, *Like A Prayer* and *Ray Of Light* albums as well as working with Elton John, Bon Jovi and Leonard Cohen, among others.



PAULINHO DA COSTA

One of the greatest percussionists of all time and also one of the most prolific, Da Costa's exhaustive discography reads like a who's who of the greats. He has played on albums by Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, the Bee Gees, Whitney Houston, Celine Dion and Bob Dylan, contributed to over 150 film soundtracks and has released seven solo albums.



JONATHAN MOFFATT

Jonathan 'Sugarfoot' Moffatt got his break after moving to Los Angeles from his native New Orleans in 1979. Within five weeks of relocating, he began touring with The Jacksons. It was during 1984's Victory Tour that he was spotted by Madonna. He played on her subsequent three albums and tours and also went on the road with Michael Jackson, George Michael and Diana Ross.

Getty Images



SIEDAH GARRETT

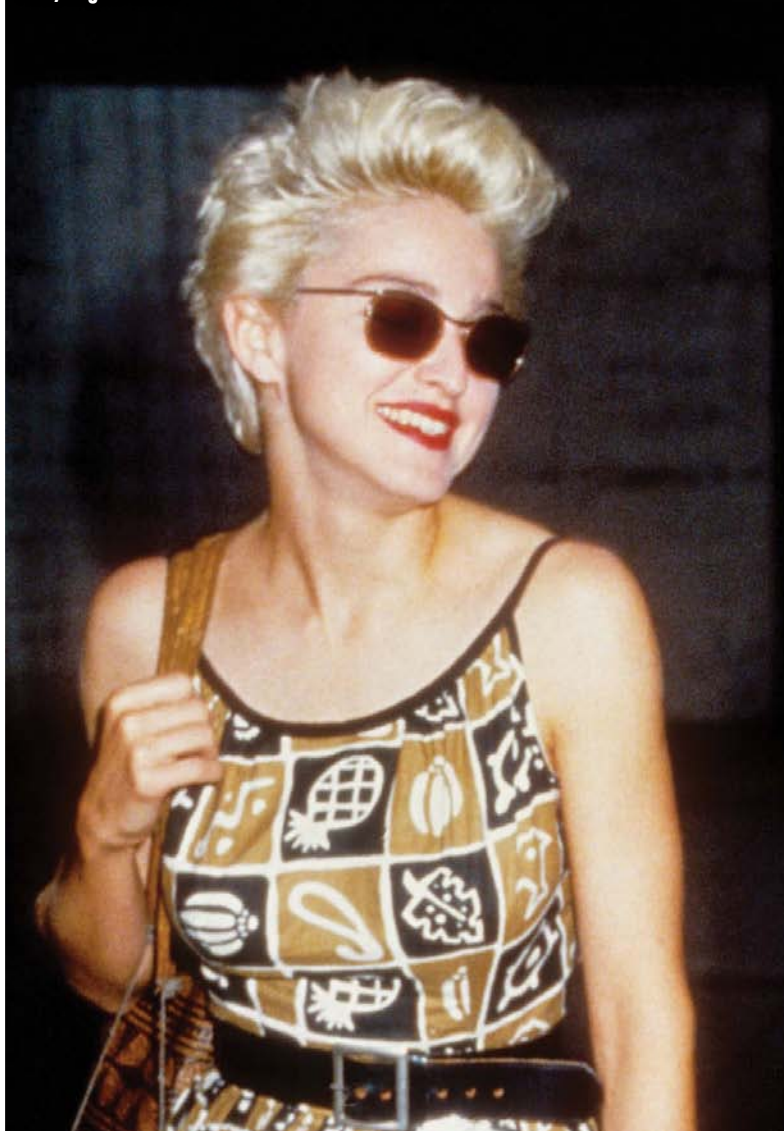
Having been discovered by Quincy Jones in 1980, singer Siedah Garrett began singing on his records before a short-lived spell in R&B group Plush. She had hits singing with Dennis Edwards and Michael Jackson and co-wrote *Man In The Mirror* for the latter. She later sang lead with the Brand New Heavies and reteamed with Madonna in 2004 for the Reinvention Tour.



BRUCE GAITSCH

Already a successful session musician, Bruce's career as a songwriter took off after he co-wrote *La Isla Bonita* with Madonna and Pat Leonard, which won an ASCAP award in 1987. As well as writing and recording seven solo albums, Bruce has worked extensively with Richard Marx (who also sang backing vocals on *True Blue*), as well as Agnetha Fältskog, Chicago and, for the past 30 years, Peter Cetera.

Madonna and Sean Penn leaving rehearsals for their invitation-only play *Goose And Tomtom*, New York, August 1986



"Everything sort of happened at once, one big explosion of publicity. You could never anticipate that kind of attention, the grand scale of it all. It turned into a circus" **MADONNA**

— *Desperately Seeking Susan* came out, I was going with a well-known actor, then I announced my marriage, then the *Playboy* and *Penthouse* pictures came out – everything sort of happened at once, one big explosion of publicity. No matter how successful you want to be, you could never ever anticipate that kind of attention, the grand scale of it all. I never thought I was going to be getting married with 13 helicopters flying

over my head. It turned into a circus. You couldn't have written it in a movie. No one would have believed it."

Following her wedding, Madonna had decided against a lucrative offer of taking her Virgin Tour overseas, choosing instead to begin work on her third album, consider film roles and make a home in Malibu with her new husband. Struggling to settle into the LA life, Madonna's homesickness for her adopted hometown of

New York was alleviated by frequent visits by her friends, one of the most frequent being Stephen Bray, a former boyfriend from Detroit who had followed her to New York and become one of her first, and most successful songwriting partners.

Inspired by her state of post-marital bliss, Madonna and Stephen began working on song ideas for her next album. "Whatever she is going through, that's what inspires her," Bray later told *Billboard*. "At that time, she was in love so that's what the record became about."

While on tour earlier in the year, Madonna had developed a strong rapport with Pat Leonard, the tour's musical director. Together they wrote *Get Up, Stand Tall*

(which would later become *White Heat*) and *Love Makes The World Go Round*, a song written for Live Aid. Happy with the direction the album was heading in, Madonna decided she would co-produce the album with Stephen and Pat – much to the chagrin of her record label, who had wanted a big-name producer to helm it. This time, Madonna refused to back down. Musical differences with Reggie Lucas had marred her debut album and, appalled at how much Nile Rodgers earned for producing *Like A Virgin*, the already business-minded Madonna was insistent on her choice of collaborators. "She really fought for that and I'm very thankful that she did, because that's what really put me



"There are still people who think of me as a little disco tart. Every time I do a video or a song, people go 'Oh, that's what she's like'. I'm all of them. And I'm none of them" **MADONNA**

on the map as a producer/songwriter," Pat Leonard tells *Classic Pop*.

As well as making financial sense, Madonna still felt that she had something to prove. Despite selling millions of albums, she sensed that she still wasn't getting the credit she deserved from her peers and from critics, who accused her of capitalising on her provocative image. "There are still those people who, no matter what I do, will always think of me as a little disco

tart," she said. "Every time I do a video or a song, people go, 'Oh, that's what she's like.' And I'm not like any of them. I'm all of them. And I'm none of them."

During one of the initial sessions in Pat Leonard's home studio, a song that would force her detractors to think again came to light. "Madonna agreed to write some lyrics for a song that I was going to write for a film called *Fire With Fire*," Pat explains. After Paramount

THE BIG PICTURE THE VIDEOS

LIVE TO TELL

DIRECTOR: JAMES FOLEY

Providing the first glimpse of "the new Madonna", *Live To Tell*'s sombre tone was captured in the simple video which featured Madonna in a simple Forties-style tea dress, scrubbed free of make-up and with her hair immaculately coiffed in the style she sported in *Shanghai Surprise*. The video was interspersed with clips of husband Sean's movie *At Close Range* as Madonna, seated in a darkened room, 'confessed' to camera in order to hammer home the emotional intensity of the lyric.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzA09A9Gjgl>



PAPA DON'T PREACH

DIRECTOR: JAMES FOLEY

Shot in New York's Staten Island, *Papa Don't Preach* was Madonna's first instance of using the music video format as a mini-movie, combining dance with intense melodrama and perfectly conveying the song's narrative of teenage pregnancy. With her new gamine crop haircut, and 'Italians Do It Better' T-shirt Madonna was entirely convincing as a teenager despite her 27 years, and delivered a heartfelt performance in the scenes with her screen father, actor Danny Aiello.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkxqxWgEEz4>



TRUE BLUE

DIRECTOR: JAMES FOLEY

Having just been awarded the first ever Video Vanguard Award from MTV, Madonna worked with the station to launch a competition for fans to make their own *True Blue* video, which was played in the US. For international use, a video which captured the Fifties feel of the song was shot, with Madonna in a diner, driving a Thunderbird convertible, and with her very own girl-group of backup singers, which included her close friends Debi Mazar and Erika Belle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P51LunEV3Sk>



OPEN YOUR HEART

DIRECTOR: JEAN BAPTISTE MONDINO

Madonna's first overtly sexual video, *Open Your Heart* featured her as a stripper in a seedy peep show. "We were going through a period where we were experimenting with freedom about the body and about sexuality," recalls Mondino. With Madonna in a sexy Marlene Stewart-designed corset and cropped black wig, the video was inspired by Liza Minnelli in *Cabaret* and Marlene Dietrich's *The Blue Angel*. The young boy infatuated with Madonna was played by model Felix Howard, a presenter on *The Tube* at the time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snsTmi9N9Gs>





Madonna in the red flamenco dress worn in the *Who's That Girl* tour, 1987

Getty Images

— turned down the instrumental, he played it to Madonna. “She said, ‘This song would be great for Sean’s new movie.’ She wrote the lyrics to *Live To Tell* right there on the spot, sang the demo once, and left with the cassette. We recut the song, but we used the same vocal because it was so innocent and shy. She had a legal pad in her hand and you can hear the paper. It’s as raw as raw can be, and that’s part of what gave it all its charm.”

Although she was determined to maintain complete control over the album, Madonna was forced to relent when presented with two songs from outside writers. Her manager Freddy DeMann had been sent a rock song called *Follow Your Heart*; Michael Ostin, an A&R exec at Warners, had heard a song called *Papa Don’t Preach* which was to launch a new artist called Christina

Dent, but he persuaded the song’s writer, Brian Elliot, to let Madonna sing it instead.

“It fit right in with my own personal zeitgeist of standing up to male authorities, whether it’s the pope, or the Catholic Church, or my father and his conservative, patriarchal ways,” Madonna said. Although she only made very minor alterations to the lyrics to earn her a credit on the song, Madonna and Pat Leonard radically rearranged *Follow Your Heart* to become *Open Your Heart*, earning them co-writer status.

By the time Madonna flew to Hong Kong to shoot the ill-fated *Shanghai Surprise* with Sean in December 1985, she was confident that she had a great record. As well as the album’s final tracklist, she had also demoed *Each Time You Break My Heart* (later a hit for Levi’s model Nick Kamen with Madonna on backing vocals) and *Spotlight* (which

‘She wrote the lyrics to *Live To Tell* right there on the spot, and sang the demo once. We recut the song but we used the same vocal. It’s as raw as raw can be”

PAT LEONARD

later surfaced on the *You Can Dance* remix album).

Upon her return to LA, Madonna swiftly shot a video for *Live To Tell*. Although it was deemed career suicide to lead the album with such a different song to what her fanbase were used to, the risk paid off when it became a huge hit and silenced even the most voracious critics, if only temporarily.

With *Papa Don’t Preach* as her next single, Madonna faced her biggest controversy to date. The song’s narrative sparked debate and protests from various groups accusing Madonna of encouraging teenagers to get pregnant and

anti-abortion groups opposing its apparent pro-life message. However, the scandal did not stop *Papa Don’t Preach* becoming a No. 1 hit on both sides of the Atlantic.

To complement her more mature sound, Madonna also unveiled a sophisticated new look. With her lithe, gym-honed figure, minimal make-up and gamine-cropped hair, the blonde with ambition that gazed out from a *Rolling Stone* cover story proclaiming “The New Madonna” was worlds apart from the streetwise urchin of before. “I got sick of wearing tons of jewellery – I wanted to clean myself off,” Madonna



In Tappan Park on Staten Island to make the video for *Papa Don't Preach*

Getty Images

explained to the *New York Times*. "I see my new look as very innocent and feminine and unadorned. It makes me feel good. Growing up, I admired the kind of beautiful glamorous women – Brigitte Bardot to Grace Kelly – who don't seem to be around much anymore." Her new image was bad news for former stylist Maripol, who saw demand for her Madonna-inspired rubber bracelets and crucifixes plummet. Her business went bankrupt within months.

Madonna's desire to evoke old-school Hollywood glamour was predominant in the Herb Ritts photoshoot released to promote the album. With her

platinum blonde hair, faded blue jeans and biker jacket, her look referenced Brando, James Dean and Monroe, while the cover of the album was a stunning close-up shot of Madonna in profile, head thrown back, a modern day remake of Warhol's Marilyn.

Releasing *True Blue* on June 30th 1986, Madonna dedicated it to "my husband,

the coolest guy in the universe". Critics reeled at the revelation that the woman they had deemed the single biggest threat to the morality of America's impressionable teens just 12 months earlier was, in fact, a helpless romantic. Even more shockingly, she could actually sing and was capable of delivering vocals that

"*True Blue* was a labour of love. It's a special album. The record is ultimately about someone who is growing up, who wants to be strong and go after what she wants" **MADONNA**



Getty Images

conveyed a range of emotions from sorrow to yearning, sexy to giddy romanticism. Even her harshest critics were forced to admit that she had proved herself a worthy peer to Prince and Michael Jackson.

"*True Blue* was a labour of love, and I'm very proud of it," Madonna said. "I'd never heard the expression 'true blue' until I met Sean, who uses it all the time. It's a special album... it says exactly what I wanted it to say. I wrote almost all the lyrics and felt the freedom to do whatever I wanted in the studio. The record is ultimately about someone who is growing up, who wants to be strong and go after what she wants."

Having announced at the beginning of her career that her ambition was "to rule the world", with *True Blue* she was well on her way to achieving it. Reaching No. 1 in 28 countries, the world's biggest-selling album of 1986, the biggest selling album of the Eighties by a female artist with sales in excess of 26 million copies, *True Blue* was, and remains, Madonna's most successful studio album. A truly landmark record, it was the moment she transitioned from pop idol to pop icon. ■

Spotify

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<http://spotify/23HXfXr>



FEVER PITCH

AFTER HIS MOVING FAMILY MEMOIR *ROMANY AND TOM*, BEN WATT HAS RETURNED TO MUSIC WITH A NEW ALBUM, *FEVER DREAM*, WORKING WITH BERNARD BUTLER TO FIND OUT IF A FOLK-JAZZ QUARTET CAN PLAY LOUD ROCK...

DAVE STEINFELD

Ben Watt has worn many hats over the years but he is probably best known as being the male half of Everything But The Girl. That duo – which consisted of Watt and Tracey Thorn, later his wife – released an eclectic series of albums, 11 of them in fact, between 1984 and 1999. They struck gold on the pop charts with *Missing*, a single from their 1994 disc *Amplified Heart*. The Todd Terry remix of the song proved especially popular and basically provided the musical template for their next, more electronic-sounding phase... but the fact is, Everything But the Girl (much like Watt himself) always defied easy categorisation. Their albums drew on many genres, ranging from folk music to bossa nova, before the general public ever took note of them for *Missing*.

After Everything But The Girl went on an indefinite hiatus around the turn of the millennium, Watt stayed busy mainly as a DJ and label owner. He immersed himself further in electronics and dance music, producing remixes for Sade (who first came to prominence around the same time as EBTG did), Maxwell, Zero 7, and others. In 2003 he launched his label Buzzin' Fly and around the same time he co-founded the deep house club series Lazy Dog in London – which is why the two projects he released in 2014 took much of his recent fan base by surprise.

That year, Watt released both a book and a solo album. The book, *Romany And Tom*, is an exhaustive and moving memoir about his parents. (It's actually Watt's second tome; *Patient*, released in 1996, chronicles his brush with the rare auto-immune disease Churg-Strauss Syndrome, which altered his appearance considerably and almost cost him his life.) The album, *Hendra*, was also his second; Watt released a fine solo effort called *North Marine Drive* back in 1983.

It may have taken three decades and change for Ben Watt to drop his second proper solo album – but his new CD, *Fever Dream*, arrives less than two years after *Hendra* and it feels very much like an extension of that album – which is not a bad thing at all. *Fever Dream* again finds Watt working with former Suede

guitarist Bernard Butler and engineer Bruno Ellingham (the three co-produced the disc). Its 10 songs combine reflective lyrics with moody musical textures, often supplied by Butler. The jazzy *Running With The Front Runners* echoes *Hendra's* *Golden Ratio* musically, while *Bricks And Wood* thematically recalls that album's *The Levels* in its depiction of loss and return. Other standouts on *Fever Dream* include the ballads *Winter's Eve* and *New Year of Grace* (the latter featuring Marissa Nadler on backing vocals).

The first single (and opening track) is *Gradually*, which is a love song... but not a typical love song. It's about a more subtle, mature love that creeps up on the narrator but sticks around for the long haul: "There wasn't a lightning strike/ It just crept over me/ Something about your love just got to me gradually..."

Ben Watt is a very good, and serious, interview subject whose sincerity comes through as strongly

"I ENDED UP PLAYING 60 SHOWS OFF THE BACK OF HENDRA, AND MY VOICE GOT STRONGER AND MY CONFIDENCE DEEPENED"

in person as it does in his music and writing. He sat down with *Classic Pop* to talk about Tracey Thorn's current work, Bernard Butler, David Bowie, and of course the making of *Fever Dream* and the inspiration behind its songs...

How was this album similar to making *Hendra*... and how was it different?

When I look at *Hendra*, I see a very heartfelt record – but I also see a slightly tentative record. It was me discovering how to write songs again. It was me discovering how to sing again! I certainly hadn't been a lead singer for many years. In Everything But the Girl, I was always second fiddle to Tracey. So when I listen to *Hendra*... I can hear my uncertainty, in how to pronounce certain syllables in words. You know, little things like that stick out at me now.

But what happened was, I went on tour. I ended up playing 60 shows off the back of *Hendra*. My voice got stronger. My confidence deepened. My relationship with Bernard Butler, as a guitarist, also deepened. And I got to the end of that touring period



really invigorated! It was like I felt I'd tapped into a nucleus of myself in some way – that I had circled around and reconnected with this teenage version of myself: the boy who had always wanted to be the singer. And I went into the beginning of last year with an urgency to write more material.

Let's talk about choosing to work with Bernard Butler. What do you enjoy about your collaboration with him?

I think it's interesting. No one's picked up on this but if you look at my career, I'm a habitual collaborator. I seem to need a foil a lot of the time – perhaps to express myself fully. You know, in the early days, I leant on Robert Wyatt to help me make my first EP [*Summer Into Winter*] when I was only 19. That seemed to be a very precocious move in a lot of people's eyes! And then of course, I shelved my solo career and decided to go in with Tracey. After *Everything But the Girl*, my first DJ enterprise was a duo with Jay Hannan in *Lazy Dog*. And now here I am embarking on a new project, and what's the first thing I do? I look for a foil. That was Bernard Butler. I didn't do it with a sense of awareness at the time but with hindsight, I can see there is a pattern here!

I had a confidence going into *Fever Dream*. I had this idea of putting a band together, and the main emphasis would be on the dynamics in the song. And I had this idea of four musicians in a room with very simple instruments. A small jazz drum kit, a double bass, and two guitars. They were the kind of instruments that you actually had to put a lot of human sweat into, to get a great sound out of.

In rehearsal, I encouraged everybody to work out how they could go from the quietest thing to the loudest thing in any one particular song. We certainly

"IF YOU LOOK AT MY CAREER, I'M A HABITUAL COLLABORATOR. I SEEM TO NEED A FOIL TO EXPRESS MYSELF FULLY"

tried that on songs like *Gradually* and *Woman's Company*... almost like a restricted folk-jazz quartet trying to play loud rock. I thought that was an interesting concept.

It feels like you're both looking back and moving forward on the album, and that there's a sense of renewal when the 10 songs are taken together. *Gradually* is the first single, and there's certainly a sense of renewal on that song...

I picked up a few stories from other people's relationships when I was on the road. Then I turned the lens on myself; I wrote *Gradually* and then I wrote *New Year Of Grace*. For me, they're like the bookends on the record. *Gradually* is a troubled song

in many ways; it talks about the slow development of a long-term relationship. And as I've admitted to other people, there's a lot of my relationship with Tracey in there. We've been together 35 years. The song tries to be honest. You know, even in a relationship that's built on a huge well of affection, there are periods where you travel at different speeds, and you have to work your way through them, and sometimes it's difficult. But I do like the conceit of love moving gradually. So often pop is about love hitting you flat in the face!

But then I wrote *New Year of Grace*, which basically says if you hang in there, there are those unexpected moments of transcendent beauty in relationships. And that became the kind of hopeful end to the troubled beginning.

This is just a guess, but was *Winter's Eve* written about your father?

Mmm-hmm. It's about both me and my father. Both of us have had a history of depression. My father was particularly bad. I'd gone through a period in my life where I suffered that depression a few years ago. I'm actually in a pretty good state at the moment but it's always there, lurking in the background.

I just had this image of standing on the first day of winter – you know, October 31st, the last day of autumn. You're there facing the winter months. How do you deal with it? And it was a coincidence, but October 31st was also my father's birthday. It's quite ironic that a man with depression was born on winter's eve! [laughs] And I just tried to tackle the idea of how we both deal with that scenario. My Dad dealt with it very badly. He was always stuck in the winter. It drove him into himself. Yet the role I carve out for myself is of somebody who won't let it beat me. You know, the chorus goes "There's still so much I want to do". It's about resilience.

A lot of your songs deal with that subject. One on the album that I also liked – but wasn't sure what it was inspired by – is *Running With The Front Runners*...

It's specifically about a memory of a particular club where I used to go, and also where I used to DJ. It was quite an iconic club in London called Plastic People. It actually closed recently – largely because of the gentrification of the area where it was located... it would have been quite easy to write a depressing song about how clubland is driven out by money. But what happens of course is that clubland survives. All it does is just move out to the next area. It goes one district further out and it sets up a club in the next undeveloped part of town. You know, it happens in Brooklyn and it happens in London. It's an optimistic song; it says that the heart of dancing and of club life doesn't die. "These are the last days of disco/ Until the new days of disco..."



Ben Watt: "Gradually is about the slow development of a long-term relationship. So often pop is about love hitting you flat in the face!"

I also want to ask you about the Everything But The Girl song *25th Of December*. It's so simple but so beautiful. Would it be true to say that was also autobiographical?

Well, obviously, it's set on Christmas Day. I think I talk about being 30 in the song. It sketches a quick picture of what Christmas was like and also about how your relationship with your parents remains complicated even as they get older. How it's difficult for parents being parents. How you can be 30 and still feel you don't know anything.

Then the last verse is in a different location. It's actually in the Oxford house where my parents lived in their 60s. There's the image of my mother: she's stormed out of the house and she's crying on the towpath, by the river. And I'm sitting at the top of the stairs, you know, angry again at how we've come to blows in some argument. But then feeling the urge to repair – to pick up a key that's too big for my hands and somehow unlock this problem between us. I think in some ways [that song] is a precursor to the whole relationship with my parents in *Romany And Tom*.

On a completely different note... because it happened so recently, and was such a big loss to music, could you give your thoughts on David Bowie?

Well, I was very aware of him growing up. He was such a strong, iconic figure. Sort of untouchable in a way. I remember feeling the same way about Prince in the Eighties – just ridiculously talented, mercurial, ever-changing [this interview took place a week before Prince was found dead]. You know, no genre was too difficult. I've always respected people like that: people who have that ability to shape-shift with confidence and elegance. And he always struck me as somebody like that.

He was another great collaborator, you know? He would always invite someone unusual into the studio! You know that famous, searing, circular guitar that goes through *Heroes*? Robert Fripp, isn't it? He was always willing to experiment with his collaborators – confident in his own role and knowing that he needed a foil.

Yeah, that's a good point. Whether it's Robert Fripp or, later on, Nile Rodgers...

Exactly. And Mick Ronson at the beginning. Just great! I used to joke with Bernard when we first started, "I'll be David Bowie and you be Mick Ronson" [laughs].

Tell us a little about what Tracey's been up to with her own projects...

She wrote *Bedsit Disco Queen*, which was her version of growing up as a woman in pop. It told the history of The Marine Girls and Everything But The Girl, from her perspective. And then she followed that up with another book which came out last year called *Naked At The Albert Hall* – which was a series of kind of mini-essays and memoirs about the process of singing. It was about her as a singer, which was something she felt she hadn't addressed in the first book. And it was also a vehicle for essays on other singers. She wrote brilliant stuff about Karen Carpenter and Dusty Springfield and Scott Walker; it's a great book.

"BOWIE WAS SUCH AN ICONIC FIGURE. LIKE PRINCE – RIDICULOUSLY TALENTED, MERCURIAL, EVER-CHANGING"

She also writes a twice-monthly column for *New Statesman* magazine, which is one of the left-leaning cultural beacons in the UK. And she's currently a judge on the panel for the Baileys Prize, which is a leading fiction prize for women writers in the UK. It's a big thing over here. So she's been feverishly reading books, basically.

It's quite interesting since we've sort of parked the band, how we've diverged into our separate, respective interests. You know, I've stayed very much tied to music – moving forward with music. And Tracey's gone to her other great love, which is books. In terms of Everything But The Girl, it really is on a near-permanent hiatus. I never say 'never' about anything. But in the foreseeable future, I can't see me and Tracey reactivating the name. You know, we're both very happy in the solo careers that we've carved out for ourselves. ■





REISSUES AND BEYOND

WAXY MUSIC ENTHUSIASTS HAVE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE AS WE EXPLORE THE DARKER RECESSES OF THE VINYL WORMHOLE TO SEEK OUT THE BEST NEW RELEASES ON YOUR FAVOURITE FORMAT, FROM SEVENTIES GLAM TO EIGHTIES EXOTIC POP AND ALL POINTS IN BETWEEN...

PAUL LESTER



THOMPSON TWINS – SET

This is a double vinyl edition, initially exclusive to Record Store Day in red vinyl, of Thompson Twins' second album, from 1982, following on from 1981's *A Product Of... (Participation)*. It features a newly remastered version of the original Steve Lillywhite-produced album on the first LP and four remixes on the second, including extended iterations of *Bouncing* and *Runaway* and two versions of the album's best-known track, *In The Name Of Love*, released as a single at the time even if it only made the lower reaches of the charts.

If you have ever sensed a spiritual chasm yawning between yourself and the medium we shall, for reasons of brevity, refer to as "recorded music", then perhaps you should take a gander at Keepers, a subscription-based record club for vinyl lovers. What's the hook? Well, each month the people at what we should heretofore refer to as KRC recruit a musician to pick a

record from their collection and write their own liner notes on it. They then pack a vinyl copy of the record along with the liner notes in booklet form, and send them to subscribers.

The goal of KRC, they inform us, is "to foster a more intimate connection between musicians and listeners through the shared enjoyment of a record", allowing listeners "to connect with artists, build your collection



ASSOCIATES – SULK

While BMG are reissuing the Dundee outfit's *The Affectionate Punch*, *Fourth Drawer Down* and *Sulk* on double-CD, as well as issuing a *Very Best Of*, the only one to make it onto vinyl at this stage is their 1982 opus. *Sulk* (1982) is newly remastered from tape and comes on heavyweight 180g vinyl. Actually, vinyl size suits it, if only for the sleeve, all the better to see Alan Rankine and Billy Mackenzie in all their matinee idol glory, all heavy lids and handsome visages, surrounded by luxuriant foliage and bathed in purple and green light (see Reissue of the Month, page 98).



and maybe even get turned on to new records!" They put that exclamation mark in themselves. Clearly, this means a lot to them.

"A record is like love," says Keepers founder Matt DeCamp, mooning (we're imagining) over a copy of *Pelican West*. "As easy as it is nowadays to pull up just about any piece of music on the planet, it's the tried and true personal

recommendations that still have the strongest pull for all of us. Our goal with Keepers is to give musicians a platform to endorse the records they love and help you build an eclectic record collection in the process.

"Sometimes it'll be an introduction and other times shed new light on a record you thought you already knew. Give it a try, join up and we know you'll come

away with some keepers." See what they did there?

There are three different subscription plans: month-to-month at \$29, three months a \$81, and 12 months at \$300. Examples of choices so far include lo-fi musician Daniel Pujol on Iggy Pop's *Lust For Life* and experimental rocker Dave Schools on Meat Puppets' *Up On The Sun*. Nobody, it seems, has yet picked Culture Club's *Colour*

By Numbers or, come to think of it, anything by Marilyn, but if it's mad love for vinyl you're after, look no further. As Pujol writes of Iggy: "He never runs away from the pain. This is what I love about this album – he stays there for the pain. Iggy Pop makes it cool to deal with your pain."

Vinyl junkies are urged to investigate for themselves at <http://keepersrecordclub.com/about/>.



DURUTTI COLUMN - LC

Factory Benelux presents the second LP from Vini Reilly and his Durutti Column, first released in 1981. Now in expanded form, it's housed in a gatefold sleeve, with liner notes and archive images. The original pastel-hued music is remastered, and there are nine bonus tracks, including rare single *Danny/Enigma*, and the three songs Reilly contributed to *A Factory Quartet* in 1980. The package also includes a 7-inch single featuring live versions of *Sketch For Summer* and *Requiem For A Father*, recorded at Leeds Polytechnic in October 1980.



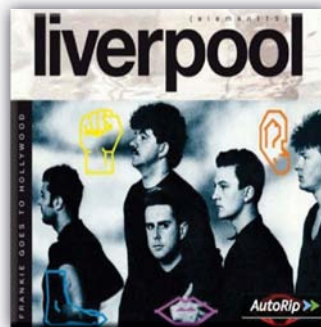
BERNARD HERRMANN - TAXI DRIVER

Herrmann managed to top his scores for *Citizen Kane* and *Psycho* with this soundtrack to Martin Scorsese's 1976 classic movie about an emotionally scarred cabbie seeking violent retribution. While the original soundtrack was reissued quite recently, this appears to be the first time the "complete" version will be available on wax: it includes an expanded version of the score, notes by Scorsese, and an epic rendition of *Diary Of A Taxi Driver*, featuring Robert De Niro as Travis Bickle, taken directly from the film.



PRINCE - FOR YOU/PRINCE

These were already on the schedules before Prince's untimely death, and inevitably there will be a flood of reissues in all formats over the coming months and years. But for now Warners are reissuing his 1978 debut *For You* on 180g vinyl. This is the album that introduced Prince the all-writing, all-producing, all-playing wunderkind: the sleeve credits list all the instruments he played... everything from guitar, bass and drums to bongos, congas, finger cymbals, wind chimes, bells, wood blocks and clavinet.



FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD - LIVERPOOL

The second and final Frankie album gets reissued on vinyl on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. It's a limited silver vinyl edition, but apart from that there are no trimmings, just the original artefact in all its glory. Of course, it wasn't quite as glorious as its predecessor, 1984's *Welcome To The Pleasuredome* with its three No. 1 singles, but *Liverpool* did give us *Rage Hard* (No. 6), *Warriors (Of The Wasteland)* (No. 19) and *Watching The Wildlife* (No. 28).



THE VERVE - A NORTHERN SOUL

Universal Music are reissuing The Verve's *A Northern Soul* – "Mad" Richard Ashcroft's crew's second studio album, which bequeathed three singles: *This Is Music*, *On Your Own* and *History* – as a 2LP vinyl set in August. As per many long-players of the time (1995), the album only received a very limited release on vinyl in the UK and only came out on CD and cassette in the States. The original vinyl is therefore expensive – although this may well put the kibosh on all that.



AIR - TWENTYYEARS

The first compilation of the work of the much-admired French duo comes in CD and double gatefold vinyl form. Side 1 (or A-side, as they're putting it) comprises *La Femme D'Argent*, *Cherry Blossom Girl*, *Kelly Watch The Stars* and *Playground Love* (with Gordon Tracks). B-side features *Sexy Boy*, *Venus*, *All I Need* and *Alpha Beta Gaga* (Edit 91). C-side is *Moon Fever*, *Don't Be Light*, *How Does It Make You* and *Surfing On A Rocket*. Finally on D-side you get *Alone In Kyoto*, *Talisman*, *Run* and *Le Soleil Est Près De Moi*. Formidable!



DAVID BOWIE - LIVE SANTA MONICA '72 / ZIGGY STARDUST MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

Heavyweight vinyl editions of albums previously included in the *Five Years 1969-1973* box set, now out individually. *Santa Monica '72* was recorded for an FM radio broadcast on 20 October 1972 during the Ziggy tour; *Ziggy Stardust: The Motion Picture* was recorded (and bootlegged) at the Hammersmith Odeon in London on 3 July 1973 but wasn't issued by RCA until 1983.



GARBAGE - STRANGE LITTLE BIRDS

Garbage will release their sixth studio album on their own Stunvolume label in June. The 2LP vinyl set (designed by Ryan Corey and Jeri Heiden at SMOG design) apparently "looks stunning" and the 11 tracks are pressed across three sides of vinyl, with the fourth side featuring an etched design. Shirley Manson has been talking up the record: "It's an adult record. It's not a pop, frilly, fun, frivolous, frothy thing," she told *Rolling Stone*. "It is vulnerable, and fragile." So now you know.

CLASSIC POP

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electronic
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Reviews



REVIEWS

NEW RELEASES **p95**

ABC are back! Plus Marsheaux, Dinner, Starless, Brian Eno, Dexys, Jimmy Somerville, Katy B, Dr Robert...
by WYNDHAM WALLACE

REISSUES **p102**

Associates, Paul McCartney, Air, The Cars, The Go-Go's, Breathe and more
by PAUL LESTER

COMPILATIONS **p106**

1987 indie, Eighties UK psychedelia, women on Cherry Red, and duets
by PAUL LESTER

FILMS/BOOKS **p107**

Dave Stewart, Nina Simone, the Ramones and David Bowie
by MARK LINDORES

LIVE & EVENTS **p111**

A-ha, Eddie Reader, The Stranglers, Gary Barlow and mates, Adele...
by IAN RAVENDALE, MIK CURTIS

RATINGS



LOVE IT
BUY IT
STREAM IT
PONDER IT
AVOID IT



DR ROBERT

THE BLOW MONKEYS ENJOYED A GOLDEN PERIOD OF HITS IN THE EIGHTIES AND RESURFACED IN 2007 FOR FOUR MORE STUDIO ALBUMS. THIS MAY, DR ROBERT UNVEILED HIS FIRST ENTIRELY SOLO PROJECT IN 15 YEARS, BUT RIGHT NOW WE TURN HIS ATTENTION TO THE COMPETITION... **Rik Flynn**



ABC

VIVA LOVE

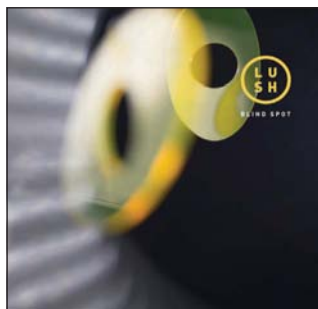
Martin Fry is a clever pop conceptualist. We were sparring partners back in the day but ABC's production was on a different level, courtesy of Trevor Horn. They shone brightly but got into the nostalgia thing very early on, which is surprising given their 'cutting edge' credentials. This is a deliberate attempt to recreate their 'classic' sound, which is cool... but ever so slightly pointless.



ELLIE GOULDING

KEEP ON DANCIN'

Dancing is the only sane response to this weird existence we're thrown into and Enlightened Ellie knows this and intends to keep on dancing... until the cows come home, apparently. Nice auto-tuned whistling; Roger Whittaker would be thrilled. It doesn't really touch me like Hank Williams or, indeed, Roger Whittaker, but that's not the point, I know.



LUSH

OUT OF CONTROL

It's very controlled. And, well, Lush. And it casts a somnambulant spell. It puts me in a sleepy, trance-like state. I wanted it all to dry up for a minute so I could feast on its disparate parts, but I guess that's the point. It's big and linear and soup-like. I understand the urge to fire it up and make new music, though, and I wish them the best of luck.



DINNER

COOL AS ICE

Fabulous. Sounds like Arnold Schwarzenegger jamming with the Depeche Mode road crew... a bit of a wild guy, apparently. I know I'm in no position to laugh at names, but Dinner? That's not right. It sounds a bit like Nico on downers. I have a feeling it's probably not very good, but it's hard to be sure so it's a thumbs-up from me just in case.



LAURA MVULA FEAT. WRETCH 32

PEOPLE

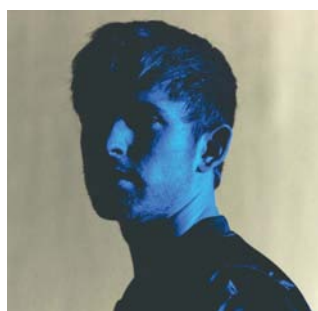
Brave and beautiful. Proper lyrics, too. There is passion and righteousness here but it isn't finger-pointing or preachy. "Don't know if I can trust a priest again..." I'm with you there, Laura. Musically it's got a bit of Damon Albarn's *Everyday Robots* groove but without the Dusty Springfield Sixties melodic suss. It's still great, though.



JANET JACKSON

DAMN BABY

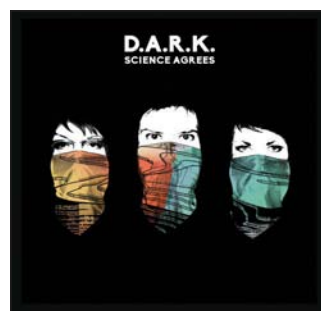
I don't believe even Janet believes in this. It's full of twists and turns and syncopated hi-hats and Moog madness and broken beats and false starts and fake endings — but it's got shark eyes. It's lifeless. It sounds like she's lost in showbiz and knows it. When that happens, it's time to take a break. Janet is cool, I hope she works it out. Maybe go fishing? I know a good dyke near Wisbech.



JAMES BLAKE

MODERN SOUL

Familiar soundscape from choirboy James. Detuned keyboards and gospel-like piano chords enveloped by myriad pulsating beats and pieces... but it's his voice that gets you every time. It's a proper soul voice, in a weirdly cold, detached way: no attempt to use the usual tricks of the trade, vibrato or histrionic 'emoting', it's straight and great. He's making great modern soul music.



D.A.R.K.

CURVY

Dolores does that thing with her voice only once in this song, thank the Lord. Remarkable restraint. Andy plays that lovely Smiths bass. I loved The Smiths; The Cranberries less so, if I'm honest. Here they are in a glorious melange, a bittersweet mash-up. It's D.A.R.K. alright but I prefer *I Saw The Light* by Hank Williams, though I know that's not the point.



ABC THE LEXICON OF LOVE II

VIRGIN/EMI



"YOU GOT LIGHT, YOU GOT SHADE, YOU GOT BEAUTY AND BEAST/ ALL COME TOGETHER TO MAKE A MASTERPIECE". OVER THREE DECADES ON, ABC TELL IT LIKE IT IS...



For some, 1982's *The Lexicon Of Love* represents a pinnacle of pop perfection, its literate romance lusciously produced by Trevor Horn, its nostalgic aesthetics a counterpoise to its state of the art sound. Doubters, however, struggle with Martin Fry's showy vocal mannerisms,

the brass flourishes, the guitar harmonics, the busy bass lines – Alan Partridge surely mimes along to *Poison Arrow* – and, in essence, the very extravagance that make its fans so passionate. For ABC to return to their debut, therefore, is a bold move, one whose potential failure risks tarnishing the original's reputation as well as providing ammunition for those inclined against it.

Fortunately, *The Lexicon Of Love II* should both seduce devotees and send cynics scuttling away to do some reassessing, because if the original occasionally suffered from its era's excesses, this exercises just enough contemporary austerity to make even its most grandiose gestures seem stylishly restrained. Anne Dudley's orchestral

arrangements, vital to the 1982 album's decadence, may maintain ABC's opulent identity, but Fry – a married man, now 30 years older, but still as lyrically dextrous and poetically romantic as ever – approaches the concept candidly.

As he states on *Brighter Than The Sun*, he's here to "ask the boy that I once was/ About the man that I've become". The answers are engrossing. So when Fry sings, on *The Flames Of Desire*, of "The spirit of romance in your smile/ Sweeping me back two thousand years/ To bathe in the waters of the Nile", his rhapsody is perfectly matched by Dudley's swooping string melodies. *Viva Love* finds him conceding that "It's hell for leather on a helter skelter/ Just steel your nerves for a bright

white knuckle ride", before an ecstatic chorus gives in to the adrenalin provoked. *The Love Inside The Love* addresses how relationships can be maintained after that adrenalin rush has subsided, proving ABC can handle more subdued moods, the positivity of lines like "Life keeps revealing/ A deeper, deeper meaning/ Between you and me" steering just the right side of sentimentality. Yet it's *Confessions Of A Fool* that ratifies the legitimacy of what might have been an act of self-indulgence. With "All my pride crushed up in a paper cup", Fry divulges his own follies, and as his voice flies amid the lavish, sparkling setting, ABC confirm that, if this is the look of love three decades later, then we all have cause for optimism. **Wyndham Wallace**



MARSHEAUX ATH.LON

UNDO RECORDS



MARSHEAUX FOLLOW UP LAST YEAR'S REMAKE OF DEPECHE MODE'S *A BROKEN FRAME* WITH A PRISTINE MONUMENT TO SYNTHPOP. ALL GREEK TO YOU? *ATH.LON* WILL BE AN EPIPHANY...



Is it because Marsheaux are from the country of Nana Mouskouri and Demos Roussos that they've still not been embraced by international fans? While the title of Marsheaux's fifth studio album draws attention to Athens, the city in which the duo formed and where they

recorded much of this glittery collection, it also spotlights London, where one of them now lives, and one can't help but wonder what might have happened had they always been based there. Time after time they've delivered records that glisten and gleam, and yet they've failed to make a dent on global charts, while acts like Chvrches – whose last album sounds like a more twee exploration of the same sounds – fly to the top, picking up awards along the way.

And is it because they're Greek that Marsheaux sound so ingenuous, as though they've not spent their careers trying to figure out how to reimagine their favourite Eighties pop smashes and instead casually

stumbled upon a magical formula? Could this apparent innocence stem from their added perspective, given the distance that separates them from the cities in which their heroes thrived? It's something you can't fake, and *Ath.Lon* seems passionate, enthusiastic and utterly uncontrived.

And is it because they're Greek, and English is a second language, that they're able to deliver, with such sensuous ardour, lines of almost childish, touching simplicity – "I'm burning, my lips are yearning... Your kiss is compulsive, addictive, destructive" – and make them sound as poetically detached as, say, Propaganda or Depeche Mode? Aloof but seductive, Marianthi Melitsi's

and Sophie Sarigiannidou's inscrutable demeanour perfectly matches the layers of synth that beckon one in with the promise of warmth but which prove icy as Mount Olympus.

Or is it simply because we're so spoiled for choice that we feel we don't need the thrilling *Burning's* motorik thrust, or *Sunday's* Depeche Mode sophistication, or *Wild Heart's* feminised, Joy Division melancholy, or *Strong Enough's* contagious pop, or *Mediterranean's* slow motion, OMD elegance, or *Let's Take A Car's* industrial, Gary Numan intensity? Be warned: never look a gift horse – Trojan or not – in the mouth. Apotheism or not, this is Marsheaux' "Eureka!" moment. **WW**

DINNER PSYCHIC LOVERS

CAPTURED TRACKS



There are many questions begged by Danish producer/singer Anders Rhedin's debut album, not least why he chose such an unappetising pseudonym. 'Dinner' does nothing to communicate *Psychic Lovers'* decadent riches, and instead seems to warn that he's serving up an insipid meal of meat and potatoes. But that's exactly what this isn't.

Of course, that depends upon your taste for someone who sounds like he's got a mouthful

of soup he doesn't want to spill. Honestly, when Rhedin begins to sing, 50 seconds into opening track *Cool As Ice* – his diction reminiscent of a boxer who's gone 15 rounds with Mike Tyson – the inevitable sense of astonishment may even provoke laughter. But Rhedin – who once released a hypnosis tape that announces "You know none of these words matter; they're all bullshit" – is a mischievous character. Though his delivery may be a joke by a Berlin-dwelling hipster who, on *The World*, name-checks the city's most fashionable neighbourhood, it could be a calculated bid to stand out from the crowd. If it's the latter, it's very, very successful.

So, assuming you can suspend your disbelief, Rhedin – a former member of Danish indie collective Choir Of Young Believers – offers plenty of rewards. *Turn Me*



On cheekily kicks off like Gary Numan's *Cars* before settling into a smooth slice of flirtatious Eighties pop; Rhedin delivers the chorus like he's stuttering, shifting to a robotic tone heavy with his native Danish accent, but this does nothing to diminish its allure. In fact, it might even prove to be the song that makes Howard Jones a hip name to drop – something Jones himself never achieved.

There's also *Gone*, whose sparkling synthpop can't hide its

nod to Spandau Ballet's *Gold*, and *A.F.Y.*, which sounds like a drunken Propaganda at their most industrial. Don't ignore the sultry foreign accents of *Wake Up With You*, nor the lovely *Kali*, *Take Me Home*, in which, over feather-light keyboards, Rhedin touchingly informs his beloved, "you always tell me just what I need to hear". The same could be said of this magnificent, neon-lit, glossy tribute to the sound of classic pop. Get stuck in. **WW**

STARLESS STARLESS

MARINA RECORDS



It's perhaps a little unwarranted to focus first on a single cameo when *Starless'* debut contains so many guests, but the news that The Blue Nile's Paul Buchanan makes his first appearance on a recording since 2012 will be worth prioritising. After all, with The Blue Nile on hold, Buchanan's become increasingly reclusive – and he was never that active anyway – so every appearance the honey-voiced Scot makes is worth celebrating.

Buchanan shows up on this project – put together, over a lengthy gestation period, by Love & Money's Paul McGeechan – singing on the title track, and, as you'd expect, offers a devastatingly soulful performance, singing mournfully of "a starless sky, one shutdown moon" and a "city in which we fall in love too soon", abetted by an expanded string section swirling around as though arranged by Craig Armstrong. It's a mood that McGeechan maintains throughout an album that champions Scotland's more lavish musical tendencies.

Alongside Buchanan you'll also find Chris Thomson from the perennially underrated, Glaswegian band The Bathers. His throaty, Van Morrison delivery rises in perfect synch with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra on *Misty Nights*, while Gaelic language folksinger Julie



Fowlis pops up on *DúThaich MhicAoidh*, and she also joins Karen Matheson of Capercaillie on the turbulent, climactic *The Surge Of The Sea*.

But, though McGeechan's album is – at least within Scotland's boundaries – hardly 'starless', he also makes room for lesser-known singers. Marie Claire Lee, for instance, lends her Dolores O'Riordan stylings to *Whispered Reason No. 2* and *Solitude*, the latter of which, with its stuttering, programmed beats, recalls

Massive Attack's *Mezzanine*. Kaela Rowan provides a lilting melody to *Apocalypse* and the earnest closer *Jura*, while guitarist/folk singer Andrew White offers his wonderfully husky, Peter Gabriel voice to *Within These Walls*.

Admittedly, McGeechan's string-heavy arrangements occasionally prove a little overegged, even formulaic, but such ambitious elegance is frequently to be applauded. *Starless*, one might even argue, is a stellar endeavour. **WW**

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE ELECTRONICA 2: THE HEART OF NOISE

RCA UK



Who'd have guessed Jean Michel-Jarre would still exert such influence that enough stars would answer the call to work with him today to fill two lengthy albums? *The Heart Of Noise* is Jarre's second such album in six months, and the quality of contributors hasn't diminished. Though it's a little hit and miss, the best tracks are those that make most musical sense, notably Pet Shop Boys,

who turn in *Brick England* – which will comfort those disconcerted by the duo's recent club-focussed direction – and Gary Numan, whose distinctive yodel and minor key changes lend *Here For You* a welcome, spooky quality. Yello's Dieter Meier delivers his best Lee Marvin impersonation on *Why This, Why That And Why* over a subdued backing reminiscent of One Second's quietest moments, while techno legend Jeff Mills exercises patience on the ultimately effervescent *The Architect*. Peaches, too, is on fine form – if something that sounds a lot like MIA's fine form – for *What You Want*, and France's hirsute Sebastian Tellier oversees *Gisele's* playful moves from Hi-NRG pop to Kraftwerk tribute and then back again. Some tracks, like The Orb's mischievous *Switch On*



Leon, or soundtrack king Hans Zimmer's *Electrees* – which offers the perfect moment to fetch an ice cream – are hardly unanticipated, but there are surprises as well, not least Edward Snowden's appearance on the furious techno of *Exit*. Cyndi Lauper is rendered unrecognisable on *Swipe To The Right*, emerging like a joyful Kylie Minogue, while critics' fave Julia Holter represents for the avant-garde crowd, the melancholy of her

elegantly disembodied vocal a perfect foil for Jarre's quietly shuddering programming.

There are glitches: Siriusmo's *Circus* seems like a naively unnecessary attempt to revive *Switched-On Bach*, and Primal Scream's *As One* merely recycles *Screamadelica's Come Together* at a variety of speeds. For the most part, though, *The Heart Of Noise* suggests manufacturers better prepare themselves: a resurgence in laser harp sales is coming. **WW**

BRIAN ENO THE SHIP

WARP



Brian Eno is enjoying an invigorating renaissance. Some resent his role in Coldplay's continuing existence, while others consider him a mere ambient producer; though 2012's *Lux* offered 75 minutes of drifting meditation, his collaborations this last decade with David Byrne, Underworld's Karl Hyde and poet Rick Holland have flaunted his considerable musical range.

2005's fabulous *Another Day On Earth* found Eno singing

again after two decades, and it's his voice that provides the spine to this remarkable four-track collection. *The Ship* began life as a gallery sound installation, but Eno's voice now floats, unmoored, throughout the title track's ghostly 20 minutes before drifting into *Fickle Sun (i)*, its dramatic blasts of brass like threatening thunder. Peter Serafinowicz then arrives on *Fickle Sun (ii)* to recite two minutes of computer-generated poetry, but it's the cover of The Velvet Underground's *I'm Set Free* which steals the show: tenderly imbued with an astonishing sentiment that makes it perfect funeral accompaniment, it stands, quite simply, as five of the most poignant minutes ever recorded, Eno's baritone multi-tracked to offer unforgettably moving gospel harmonies. For this alone, *The Ship* is, frankly, a masterpiece. **WW**

DEXYS LET THE RECORD SHOW DEXYS DO IRISH AND COUNTRY SOUL

100% / WARNER MUSIC



Conceived at the height of their mid Eighties fame, this album of Irish and soul songs is a strange beast that demands a certain degree of dedication. Much of this is due to Rowland's peculiar delivery. Early on, backed by little more than violins, drums and piano on *To Love Somebody*, he grunts, passionately extemporises and then starts speaking –

"please don't be so flipping kind!" – like a thrift-store Van Morrison. He brings this eccentric approach to bear on *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*, too, humming along, swallowing his words and even, at one stage, yelling his lines. But on *I'll Take You Home*, Kathleen he plays it much straighter, and on The Dubliners' *The Town I Loved So Well* there's a sense that, thanks to their Irish roots, the songs truly mean something to him and co-collaborator Sean Read. A love for soul is evident in an ebullient cover of Sixties act The Friends Of Distinction's *Grazing In The Grass*, and they get away with a cheerful interpretation of Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now*. *Let The Record Show...* is an acquired taste, but these days we expect nothing less of Dexys. **WW**

CORINNE BAILEY RAE THE HEART SPEAKS IN WHISPERS

GOOD GROOVE / VIRGIN EMI



Polite, upmarket and tasteful are words usually associated with the banal end of the musical scale. But, from time to time, someone arrives to nullify such prejudices. Corinne Bailey Rae is one such artist, and her third album is a refined, often exquisite, showcase for a voice that's an object lesson in restraint and for songs so classy they're draped in mink. Whether she's letting her heart

"speak in whispers" on *The Skies Will Break* or, on *Taken By Dreams*, echoing Prince at his most fragile – *Condition Of The Heart* comes to mind – there's a tremulous, uplifting beauty here. On the jazzy future soul of *Been To The Moon* we get hints of Minnie Riperton and Lianne La Havas, while the slick yet humble swagger of *Walk On* recalls Erykah Badu.

If she slips, it's only on *Stop Where You Are*, whose initial nuances dissolve into a heavy-handed, Coldplay climax – one that even mimics their penchant for uniting crowds by simply chanting "woah" – and at over 55 minutes, the polished nature of her musicians' performances can become a little wearing. Otherwise, this has all the finessed charms of early Norah Jones. Sometimes there's no need to be rude. **WW**

STEVE JANSEN TENDER EXTINCTION

STEVE JANSEN PRODUCTIONS



Quite why Japan never connected on a grander scale is hard to define, but it's unlikely the 21st Century's dumbed down culture will be any kinder to former drummer Steve Jansen, whose second album retains their elegance and cerebral approach. For starters, Jansen – like his once colleague David Sylvian – is unafraid of atmospheric instrumentals like the aptly titled *Diaphanous One*, or *Simple Day*, which is so frail

as to be barely extant. He also favours gorgeously intricate, but irrefutably lugubrious tracks like the half-lit *Captured*, on which Swedish singer Thomas Feiner serenades us, and the prickly, Eno-esque *Her Distance*, to which Irish singer songwriter Perry Blake contributes vocals and lyrics.

The latter also recalls Rain Tree Crow, Jansen's 1989 collaboration with his Japan band mates, as does *Give Yourself A Name*, with Sweet Billy Pilgrim's Tim Elsenburg keening voice and striking lines like "I shiver like an addict/ Filling veins full of static". Jansen meanwhile offers luxurious sound design, distinguished by his trademark, curiously timbred percussion, and supplies his muted vocals on the slowly swelling *Mending A Secret*. Jansen's still living a 'quiet life', and it's as cultivated as one would hope. **WW**

CYNDI LAUPER DETOUR

SIRE RECORDS



When Cyndi Lauper decided to call her eleventh album *Detour*, she wasn't joking. It's not the first time she's strayed away from familiar territory – her last album, for instance, was a blues collection. But perhaps only those who know her best could have expected 40 minutes of country covers.

She acquits herself surprisingly well: that bubblegum voice, complete with helium-powered whoops, might initially feel out of place

on opener *Funnel Of Love* and the honkytonk shuffle of the title track, a duet with Emmylou Harris, but she still provides a credible partner to Willie Nelson on his own *Night Life*, and as she opens up on the pedal steel flavoured tearjerker, *Misty Blue*, one begins to wonder why she didn't do this before. Then she sings *The End Of The World*, and you realise sometimes she lacks the sophistication to lift a country song from pedestrian to celestial. She's not off-key, it's true, but if this were playing in a bar you'd wonder where the karaoke machine was. A duet with Vince Gill – on Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty's uproarious *You're The Reason Our Kids Are Ugly* – also suffers when Lauper seems to mistake it for *She Bop* and indulges that hiccup routine of hers. Still, what's a country album without a little tragedy? **WW**

KRISTIN KONTROL X-COMMUNICATE

SUB POP



If Kristin 'Dee Dee' Welchez' 'other' band, Dum Dum Girls, were first known for channelling the sound of Sixties girl groups through the indie spirit of C86, then her new solo project is likely to be known for channelling the sound of Eighties female pop through the hipster spirit of 2016. That much is clear from the opening flourish of twin saxos on *Show Me*, but in truth this isn't entirely new territory for Welchez: Dum Dum Girls employed veteran

producer Richard Gottehrer (The Go-Gos, Blondie) for their last albums, and she's clearly unafraid of the mainstream sound of Reagan-era America.

Whether the MOR production is ironic is open to question, but at times it sounds so much like a mid-Eighties Pat Benatar album – given a loving, 21st century remix treatment – that it's easy to believe it's a sincere gesture. *Face 2 Face*, a bombastic number punctuated by rawk guitars, rides on a low slung, dubby bassline, while the title track, with its slinky Peter Hook outro, offers all the sass of Bananarama alongside the synth arpeggios of Pet Shop Boys. There are also flashes of *French Kissin'*-era Debbie Harry, while *Goin' Through The Motions*'s chorus even provides an unexpected, inexplicable reminder of Amazulu. Welchez, it seems, is undeniably committed to her goal. **WW**

GARBAGE STRANGE LITTLE BIRDS

STUNVOLUME



Garbage's sixth album begins disconcertingly. After a serene opening, a punishing beat kicks in, Shirley Manson declaring, "Sometimes I'd rather take a beating/ Sometimes I'd rather take a punch/ I learn more when I'm bleeding/ You knock me down, but I get up." Arguably the lyrics echo Carole King and Gerry Goffin's troubling *He Hit Me (And It Felt like a Kiss)*, but *Sometimes* instead seems focussed on low-rent provocation.

Garbage have flirted with such imagery before, and maybe Vow's "I came to cut you up/ I came to knock you down" is no more disturbing. But what's cartoon to some is glamorised violence to others, an unthinking triumph of style over substance. Still, fans will be delighted: Butch Vig's production still – ironically – packs a nihilist punch, especially on the airless *Even Though Our Love Is Doomed* and the robust *Empty*, whose thunderous drums and growling bassline recall electronic shoegazers Curve. *We Never Tell* explores similar territory, while *Blackout* finds them polishing The Cure's edges. But, though *Amends* brings things to a thunderous climax, its slick sheen of exploitative brutality – buried within lyrics like "It's called revenge/ Cut off your nose to spite your face" – leaves an ugly taste. **WW**

KATY B HONEY

RINSE / VIRGIN EMI



With 13 collaborations listing 21 acts, the third album from Peckham's Katy B claims to "run the gamut from the underground to the top of the charts". If you're looking for a crash course in contemporary club culture, then, you could do worse than check out *Honey*.

Some names will be familiar: Major Lazer and Craig David claim responsibility for *Who Am I*, a low-slung number

on which the Bo Selecta bro keeps his cool as B insists "You and me, that's my identity", while B's bubbly chart-topping collaboration with KDA, *Turn The Music Louder (Rumble)*, may lack Tinie Tempah but remains as energetic as ever. Then the eternally hip Four Tet joins forces with Floating Points for the wobbly yet detailed house of *Calm Down*, and up-and-coming Brummie producer Hannah Wants delivers the lush, bass-heavy, bump and grind of *Dreamers*. The highlights, however, come via Wilkinson, who unites B with rapper Stamina MC on the surprisingly sedate drum & bass of *So Far Away*, and the title track, on which KAYTRANADA provokes an unusually sultry response from the singer. It's like reliving a 21st century adolescence you never had. **WW**

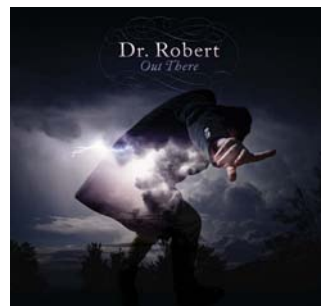
JIMMY SOMERVILLE CLUB HOMAGE

SFE



It might seem churlish to have criticised last year's *Homage* for lacking range and then to praise its twin, *Club Homage*, since this collection of extended mixes and promotional remixes adds an extra half hour to the original's 48-minute running time. Nonetheless, there's a sense of release in these protracted versions that comes from allowing the songs to bask in the jubilant sound of the disco Somerville's celebrating. That he's persuaded Tom

Moulton – who 'invented' the 12" remix – and Robbie Leslie, a Studio 54 regular, to bring their talents to bear on, respectively, *Strong Enough* and *Travesty* underlines how successfully Somerville encapsulates the late Seventies club sound. Producer John Winfield also steps up with a rerub of *Strong Enough* that prioritises its Nile Rodgers style guitar licks, while house producers Sebus and Larzo's take on *Travesty* dazzles with its imaginative mid-song breakdown. But it's Felix Gauder – producer behind massive 1990s Eurotrash hits for E-rotik, including tracks with extraordinary titles like *Max Don't Have Sex With Your Ex* and *Fritz Love My Tits* – who steals it. Using almost every trick in the mass-producer's book, his take on *Overload* is guilty of excess of which disco would be proud. **WW**



DR ROBERT OUT THERE

FENCAT RECORDS



It was a health scare that provided the impetus behind Bruce 'Dr Robert' Howard's recent burst of activity. Since The Blow Monkeys reformed in 2008, they've released four albums (plus a live one), and now he's back with his first proper solo release in some 15 years. No doubt inspired by his home in Andalucia, where it was recorded, it finds him returning to the largely acoustic territory last favoured on 1999's *Flatlands* (though also on 1996's debut solo release, *Realms Of Gold*). Such low-key appeal may be limited to established fans, but the stripped back, finger-picking simplicity of *I Ain't Running Anymore* demands Nick Drake comparisons, while *Last In Rasa*, with its snaking sax solo, nods to Tim Buckley. The Dr's condition remains stable. **WW**



FASSINE DIALEKTIK

DEFAULT COLLECTIVE



Though Fassine's debut album has moments of almost supernatural beauty, it's also shot through with the sinister (the video for *Whatever It Takes (To Help You Sleep)*, featuring a narcoleptic shielded by a hit man, perfectly suits the song's malevolent claustrophobia). *Dialektik* settles between early Massive Attack's ominous electronica and Goldfrapp at their more elegiac: *Bring The Weight Down* is full of growling synths, gunshot snares and Sarah Palmer's breathy vocals, while *Headlong* is graceful and grandiose. But it's *Englander's* sampled poetry and explosive climax that best illustrate the intense, luxurious production which makes this perfect for an hour spent brooding in front of a rain-splattered window at dusk. Lock the doors first, though. **WW**



THE LINES HULL DOWN

ACUTE



Determined cratediggers might know The Lines, a secretive post-punk act whose two early Eighties albums – and even rarer EPs – were reissued a few years back. Constructed from decades-old tapes of their unfinished third album by singer Rico Conning – also a noted, Mute Records-associated studio engineer – *Hull Down*'s eight tracks make them sound like the band Factory Records overlooked, if less Gang Of Four than before. *Zoko AM3*, like PiL clubbing with 23 Skidoo, combines dub bass, scratchy guitars and a pummelling rhythm, while *Single Engine Duster* boasts the same primitive charm as New Order's *Movement*. Throw in the prototype Happy Mondays sound of *Flat Feet* and you've got an album so cult it took some 30 years to finish. **WW**

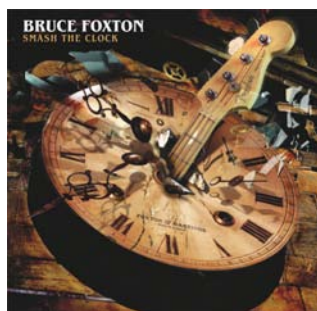


SECTION 25 ALFRESCO

FACTORY BENELUX



Section 25's second live album may differ significantly from their first – a bonus disc of a 1980 concert included with last year's reissue of their 1981 debut, *Always Now* – but it emphasises their influential role in that era's electronic scene. Recorded at Alfresco festival last year, it features a different line up to the one that signed to Factory: Jenny Ross died in 2004, and singer Larry Cassidy in 2010, so they've added Cassidy and Ross' daughter, Bethany Cassidy, on vocals, while her uncle, Vin, remains behind the drums. Their commitment to the band's legacy is unquestionable, and there's a fine crunch to their sound, but long-term fans may be taken aback by the manner that *Looking From A Hilltop's* and *Dirty Disco's* malevolence has been rendered so sweet. **WW**

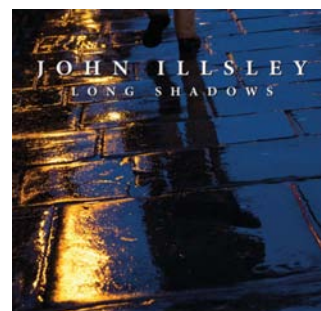


BRUCE FOXTON SMASH THE CLOCK

BASSTONE



You'd be forgiven for mistaking *Smash The Clock* for a Paul Weller album. Foxton was the bassist for The Jam, and wants us to know it (he still tours as 'From The Jam') and his vocalist here, and in that live line-up, is Russell Hastings, who sounds uncannily like the man he's mimicking. Furthermore, Weller himself plays guitar on the rather lovely, Arthur Lee vibes of *Pictures And Diamonds*, and piano on the easy-going, *Wild Wood* stylings of *Louder*. Apart from the bucolic, flute-laden instrumental *50 Yards Down Sandy Lane*, however, most of this occupies a middle ground between Weller and Foxton's mod revivalists and The Style Council, especially the brassy *Sunday Morning* and the title track, though that turns back – rather than smashes – the clock. **WW**



JOHN ILLSLEY LONG SHADOWS

CREEK TOURING & RECORDS



John Illsley appears keen to extend the old adage about pets looking like their owners, because, for much of its 35-minute duration, *Long Shadows* has the unmistakable air of Dire Straits about it, especially their *Making Movies* era. One reason is the band's co-founder and former bassist has a voice that displays the same don't-wanna-wake-you-up gruffness as Mark Knopfler – and, to be fair, Eek! Mark Everett. But there's also that blues rock flavour, as distinctive as chipotle, in the polished solos – slide guitar and electric – of songs like the title track and *In The Darkness*, and the hints of country that seep through on *Comes Around Again*. The highlight is the whisky-soaked *There's Something About You*, which could almost pass for an early Mark Lanegan recording. **WW**

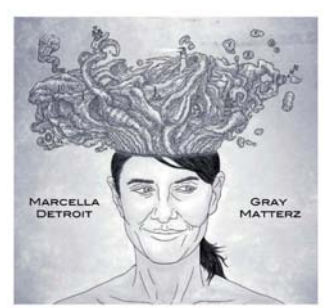


EKKOES ELEKKRITYCITY

KIDS



Seemingly eager to join those convinced they're alone in tapping the Eighties for inspiration, London trio Ekkoes at least try to render their take on the decade's pleasures more contemporary, yet they fail to develop any distinguishing traits of their own: those two 'k's in *Elekkritycity* are a twist as inventive as its dragging of Coldplay's workmanlike proficiency into the synth-pop world of Pet Shop Boys and New Order. Still, if that sounds appealing, check out *Heaven*, with the caveat that its opening lines are as imaginative as the song: "You take a piece of me everywhere you go/ But do you feel the same? I just don't know." A greater achievement, sadly, is making one yearn for the original version of Laura Branigan's *Self Control* simply by covering it. **WW**



MARCELLA DETROIT GRAY MATTERZ

MAKE ZEE RECORDS



Yes, this is indeed one of the two women who dropped the 'E' from Shakespeare's *Sister* while others were dropping 'E's of a different kind. She's kept a low profile recently, releasing just one album this last decade (and appearing on *From Pop Star To Opera Star* in 2010), but she compensates here with a flamboyant collection whose title apparently insists her 60-plus years have made her no less relevant. She's not quite right: *Turn Up The Volume On The Positive* and *Drag Queen*, which both bring to mind 2 Unlimited, would suit a mid-Nineties Club 18-30 holiday, while *The Digital Age* finds her, Meldrew-like, bemoaning the youth of today. But that voice soars sky high on the bitter-sweet *Lighthouse*, while *England's Calling* presents a touching, if rose-tinted, view of this sceptered isle. **WW**



S'EXPRESS ENJOY THIS TRIP

NEEDLE BOSS RECORDS



For some, the thought of reshaping Mark Moore's work is sacrilegious. The DJ and producer who set floors alight at clubs like The Wag was also behind some of the late Eighties/early Nineties finest pop dance crossover hits. It's hard to beat the perfection of, say, *Theme From S'Express*, so The Horrors' Tom Furse is wise to stay pretty faithful to the original. Others are more daring: serial remixer Jagz Kooner's *Superfly Guy* is particularly effective, and veterans Chris & Cosey underline *Lollypop*'s hypnotic qualities. The two cover versions buried at the collection's end – Fragile Souls' moody, acoustic *Nothing To Lose* and a jazzy *Twinkle* from French duo Noam Kantatik – are, however, more intriguing than most attempts to update Moore's sound. **WW**



WRANGLER SPARKED: MODULAR REMIX PROJECT

MEMETUNE RECORDS



Synthesisers are as in vogue this century as they ever were in the last. Now Wrangler, a project that involves Cabaret Voltaire's Stephen Mallinder, John Foxx collaborator Bengie and Phil Winter (of acclaimed folktronica act Tungst) have set their sights on an album collecting remixes of 2014's *LA Spark* that employ only one single synth per collaborator. Pop it is not: Mute impresario Daniel Miller and I Monster's Dean Honer are amongst the few who afford much in the way of melody. But synth scholars like Throbbing Gristle's Chris Carter, Nine Inch Nails' Alessandro Cortini and Robin Rimbaud aka Scanner reiterate the machine's atmospheric versatility, while Wrangler's drawn-out *Theme Meme* highlights their own skills. **WW**



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FOUR CDS, ALL DOUBLES, FEATURING PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED MATERIAL FROM THE DUNDEE DUO WHO CREATED SOME OF THE MOST INTOXICATINGLY STRANGE POP MUSIC EVER...



Almost 20 years since Billy Mackenzie's death, the music he made with multi-instrumentalist partner Alan Rankine refuses to age. Mackenzie's voice was a bolt –

a croon, a shriek, a sky-kissing caress – out of the blue (only Björk and Liz Fraser came close in terms of idiosyncrasy and unearthly power) while in the songs you could hear elements of Bowie in Berlin, Sparks, disco, torch songs, Weimar cabaret, lounge, European film soundtracks, krautrock, Scott Walker and more. Debut album *The Affectionate Punch* (we get the 1980 original, not the '82 remix), recorded in penury but sounding luxurious, is simply audacious, with tracks such as *Amused As Always* and *A Matter Of Gender* finding new avenues to explore with guitar, bass and drums. Also here are

most of the extra tracks on the 2000 reissues, plus rarities such as *Schmaltz* – rough and ragged, a punkish hurtle.

Fourth Drawer Down (1981) finds them at their most experimental on a series of 12-inches, all dark electronics, otherworldly atmospherics and fever-pitch histrionics. *White Car In Germany* throbs with Teutonic strangeness. *Kitchen Person* is a testament to their inventiveness, creating amazing sounds out of a Hoover tube, a comb and greaseproof paper, and *Tell Me Easter's On Friday* belongs in a creepy spy movie.

Sulk (1982), their last album together, is Associates'

kaleidoscopic breakthrough, containing, in *No, Nude Spoons* and *Bap De La Bap*, some of the most unorthodox music ever to reach the UK Top 10. It's sheer textural overload. You also get a CD of demos such as *I Never Will* and the unhinged *Ulcragyceptimol*.

The Very Best Of has hits, B-sides and oddities, as well as the 1993 Auchterhouse Sessions. *Stephen, You're Really Something* – an answer-song to Morrissey – is a glimpse of what might have been. In 1997 Mackenzie took his own life, but the music he left behind is as extraordinary as any made in the name of pop. **Paul Lester**

PAUL MCCARTNEY PURE

EMI



Pure is a compilation of Paul McCartney's solo and Wings music spanning 46 years. Comprising 67 tracks, it ranges from the hits to lesser-known tracks from all points of the, well, less-feted second phase of his storied career. It covers the waterfront, starting with 1970's self-titled DIY album and finishing at 2013's *New*. It's not chronological, so Paul's Dead-heads will have fun trying to fathom the meaning, if any, behind the sequencing.

This glorified Best Of is inevitably heavily weighted towards his earlier recordings, lending ballast to the argument that he peaked with *Band On The Run*, although actually 1997's *Flaming Pie* has the most inclusions (eight), which some have speculated is because it was his last to feature Linda (by contrast, 2001's Heather Mills-era *Driving Rain* has none). Similarly there is nothing from 1989's well-received *Flowers In The Dirt*, featuring collaborations with Elvis Costello, possibly because EMI are keeping their powder dry for the archive collection reissue later this year. Still, there's no arguing with a compilation that ranges from *Maybe I'm Amazed* to *Queenie Eye*, and readers are especially urged to check out *Temporary Secretary* from 1980, which sounds like a Liverpoolian Kraftwerk. **PL**

AIR TWENTYYEARS

VIRGIN



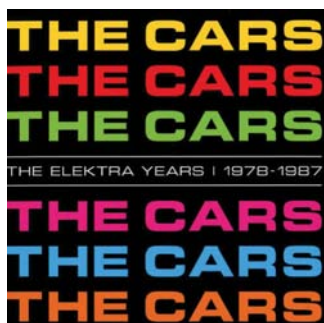
This is the first anthology of Air's work, unless you count 1997's *Premier Symptômes* collection of their early singles, or 2002's *Everybody Hertz* remix album. It comes in several formats, notably a super deluxe box set (with a disc of remixes of tracks by David Bowie, Beck, Depeche Mode, MGMT, Neneh Cherry and more), but the 2CD version should suffice, featuring as it does a "best of" CD with tracks chosen by Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît

Dunckel themselves and a CD of rarities including live radio performances, a collaboration with Charlotte Gainsbourg and Jarvis Cocker, and previously unreleased tracks such as *Adis Abebah* and *Roger Song*.

Whether *Twentyyears* is a stop-gap or a full-stop, it's a convenient reminder of the way the duo almost singlehandedly – with a little help from Daft Punk – put French music back on the map. Their work is as sublime as ever, even if it remains as difficult as ever to categorise. Should we file it under ambient, pop, chillout, neo-prog, electronica or dance? Fortunately, any such qualms melt away as soon as you hear the first notes of the mellow but mesmerising *La Femme D'Argent* and the exquisitely enervated *Cherry Blossom Girl*, and the marshmallow-soft magic continues all the way up to *Le Soleil Est Près De Moi*. **PL**

THE CARS THE ELEKTRA YEARS 1978-1987

ELEKTRA



The Cars dominated the late Seventies and early Eighties, especially in the States, with their hummable, hook-heavy synth-rock. Fronted by the charismatic Ric Ocasek, the Boston band took the rawness of punk, jerky rhythms and icy textures of synthpop and punchiness of power pop and gave them a chromium sheen. On this 6CD box set, you get all their albums from their million-selling self-titled

debut to 1987's *Door To Door*. Ocasek invests the songs with the snarl and snarkiness of punk, made palatable for mass radio consumption by tight musicianship, catchy choruses and gleaming production. My *Best Friend's Girl* was their best-known UK hit, reaching No. 3 in '78; like a shiny, uptown version of the CBGBs bands, it was every bit as melodic as Blondie. *Let's Go*, from second album *Candy-O*, was typical: Fifties high school hop pop given a "moderne" makeover. *You Might Think*, from 1984's *Heartbeat City*, dressed heartland rock in cool new wave clothes. The glossy, glacial *Drive* became ubiquitous following its continual use on Live Aid-era footage, striking the right consolatory note. But it smoothed away some of their earlier rough edges, and in 1988 they split. **PL**

THE GO-GO'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAT/ VACATION/TALK SHOW

EDSEL



There were two all-female pop-rock guitar bands duking it out for the affections of the American public in the early to mid-Eighties, and the winner was... both of them, actually. But whereas The Bangles emerged from the new psychedelic so-called "Paisley Underground", The Go-Go's, who formed in 1978, had roots in the LA punk scene – yet theirs was a very perky form of punk, with pretty

songs that drew on Fifties and Sixties pop tropes. Their debut album, *Beauty And The Beat*, brought enormous success to the band, who were fronted by Belinda Carlisle (vocals) and Jane Wiedlin (guitar, vocals). Propelled by tracks such as *Our Lips Are Sealed* (co-written by Wiedlin and Terry Hall, who had a hit with it in 1983 via Fun Boy Three), it remained at No. 1 for six weeks and sold three million copies. The follow-up, *Vacation* (1982), fared less well, although it was certified gold in the US and spawned another Top 10 US hit with the title track. Third album *Talk Show* (1984) was produced by Martin Rushent (Human League, Altered Images), and despite good reviews again sold far fewer copies than the debut. Still, if it's finger-snapping pop'n'roll you're after, then look no further. **PL**

BREATHE THIS SHINING MOMENT

FLOOD GALLERY

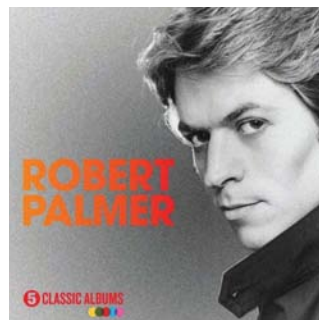


Subtitled *Recordings 1986 To 1990*, this lavish box set comprises everything by Breathe, the Hampshire band formed in 1984 by David Glasper (vocals), Marcus Lillington (guitar), Ian Spice (drums) and Michael Delahunty (bass: he left before they made it) who had a dalliance with fame in 1988. They do sound very 1988, in fact, with dollops of sax and gloss: think Johnny Hates Jazz, Swing Out Sister and Spandau Ballet (circa

Parade), with a dash of Alison Moyet and *Notorious*-era Duran. It's pop-soul with a hint of jazz-funk and rock. The trio scored in the States with *How Can I Fall?* (No. 3) and *Hands To Heaven* (No. 2, and No. 4 in the UK). Both these came from their debut album *All That Jazz*, which also included their upbeat 1986 debut single *Don't Tell Me Lies, All This I Should Have Known* (a bit like George Michael crooning *Through The Barricades*), and *Jonah*. The title track is a punchy companion piece to Brother Beyond's *The Harder I Try*, while *Monday Morning Blues* has some of the grit of Mick Hucknall's *Money's Too Tight To Mention*. Second album *Peace of Mind* fared less well in 1990 and Breathe disbanded, but this box – both albums in full, plus rarities and a 64-page book – brings an era flooding back and sheds light on a lost pop group. **PL**

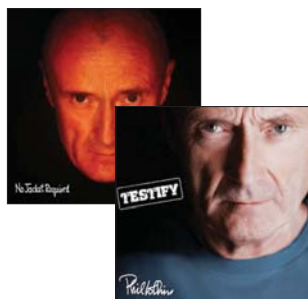
ROBERT PALMER 5 CLASSIC ALBUMS

UNIVERSAL



Available in a slimline slipcase, *5 Classic Albums* is a random selection from the catalogue of the other suave northerner from the Seventies and Eighties, one too often regarded as the poor relation of Bryan Ferry. It starts with his 1974 debut *Sneakin' Sally Through The Alley*, and if it bears comparison with the New Orleans R&B of Little Feat and The Meters, that's because they formed part of his backing band. Follow-up *Pressure Drop* (1975) features the sublime

early radio hit *Give Me An Inch*. The collection skips *Some People Can Do What They Like* (1976) and *Double Fun* (1978) and heads for *Secrets* (1979) featuring *Bad Case Of Loving You (Doctor, Doctor)* and Todd Rundgren's *Can We Still Be Friends?*. *Clues* (1980) found him moving in a more "modern" direction and working with Talking Heads' Chris Frantz and Gary Numan, bequeathing the synth-funk pop hits *Johnny And Mary* and *Looking For Clues*. Finally, skipping *Pride* (1983), we get 1985's *Riptide*, bringing Duran guitarist Andy Taylor and Chic drummer Tony Thompson onboard for a series of sublimely constructed tracks including Jam & Lewis' *I Didn't Mean To Turn You On*. It also contained *Addicted To Love*, the US No. 1 with the famous video that fixed Palmer forever in the public's imagination as the smooth lothario. **PL**



PHIL COLLINS NO JACKET REQUIRED/ TESTIFY

BBR



The latest round of Phil Collins reissues continues with this pair from 1985 and 2002. *No Jacket Required*, his third album, confirmed his global appeal, reaching pole position across most of the known universe (it was also his first US No. 1) and outselling everything else that year apart from Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms*. Mid-Eighties pop-soul bombast in excelsis, it's a feast of gated drums and mushy ballads (*One More Night*). It also confirmed Collins had magpie eyes: *Sussudio* was so similar to Prince's *1999*, you'd have thought the purple one would have sussed. *Testify* is a curiously muted affair, few of the tracks demanding to be heard, Collins seemingly retreating from his position as in-your-face global megastar. **PL**

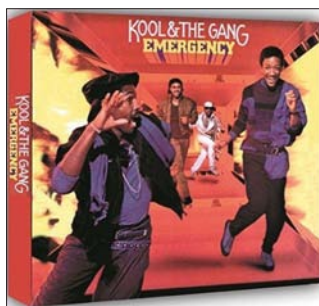


THE POINTER SISTERS GREATEST HITS

BBR



They might have emerged in the Seventies, but it was in the Eighties that the three sisters from Oakland, California, enjoyed most success with their exuberant brand of crossover R&B pop. That said, although *I'm So Excited* (a UK No. 11 hit in 1984) is here, the likes of *Automatic* (No. 2, 1984), *Jump (For My Love)* (No. 6, 1984) and *Neutron Dance* (US No. 6, 1984) are not. There's a good reason for that – this is a Greatest Hits set from 1982, and BBR have neglected to expand it with their later successes. Instead, they add to this double-length reissue a slew of earlier tracks, singles and B-sides alongside their Stateside hit version of Bruce Springsteen's *Fire* from 1979, their 1981 UK Top 10 hit *Slow Hand* and the gospel-infused disco of *Happiness*. **PL**



KOOL & THE GANG EMERGENCY

BBR



New Jersey's Kool & The Gang picked up the baton from Earth Wind & Fire as the UK's favourite black crossover pop band. This a double-CD version of the former jazz turned funk turned glossy pop-soul veterans' biggest-selling album, from 1984, the year that saw them chart with ballads such as *Cherish* and funky jams such as *Fresh*. The album's success was impressive considering they'd formed some 20 years before – but then it was hardly surprising, given the polished nature of the music, the honed performances and slick production. Here, the album is expanded with a Kool hit megamix, plus nearly a dozen remixes, extended editions and dub versions which lend the originals the spacious atmosphere of far more experimental music. **PL**



JOHN FOXX 21ST CENTURY MAN: A MAN, A WOMAN AND A CITY

METAMATIC



Last year's *20th Century: The Noise* featured tracks from the first two decades of Foxx's career. This one collates his music from the last 15 years, notably his work with the feted (Robin Guthrie of The Cocteau Twins, on a drifting slice of 2009 atmospherica called *Estrellita*) and obscure (Gazelle Twin, The Belbury Circle), the latter confirming his cool status with the new generation of electronicists. There are team-ups also with Jori Hukkonen, Louis Gordon and Detroit electro-punks ADULT, plus Gary Numan, who has been singing Foxx's praises for aeons. Titled *Talk (Are You Listening To Me?)*, it's the sort of noir futuretronica you'd expect from these two doyens of dystopian robo-pop. **PL**

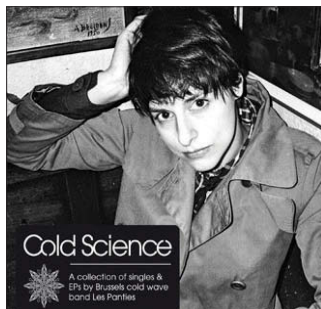


DIVINE SHOOT YOUR SHOT: THE DIVINE ANTHOLOGY

HIGH FASHION



Apparently, when Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe first heard New Order's *Blue Monday*, they wept – not because it was a brilliantly innovative piece of electronic dance music, which it was, but because the Mancunians had beaten them to it... "it" being hi-NRG disco pop in thrall to producer Bobby Orlando. Further evidence that PSB were familiar with Bobby O can be gleaned from the 1982 title track of this 2CD compilation of camp trash icon Divine's hits, from which they appear to have nicked wholesale the undercarriage and melody for *Opportunities (Let's Make Lots Of Money)*. Still, it worked both ways: *Shoot Your Shot* filched the bassline from Donna Summer's *I Feel Love*, while 1983's *Love Reaction* robs *Blue Monday* blind. **PL**

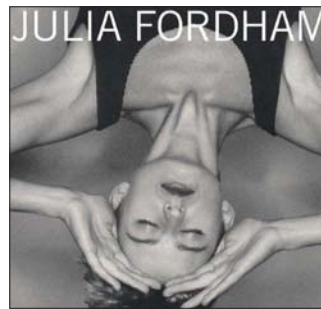


LES PANTIES COLD SCIENCE

LES DISQUES DU CREPUSCULE



Cold Science is a singles anthology from Les Panties, a cold wave group from Brussels who, between 2011 and 2015, issued three singles and EPs in thrall to Eighties postpunk and synthpop, heavy on European noir glamour and Teutonic froideur. With a very 1980-85 visual sense and using vintage synths and drum machines for authenticity, they're perfect for people that love bands from that golden age, from The Passions to Propaganda. You can imagine *L'Arrivée* playing late at night at say, London's Batcave in 1982. *Diving* is like something Susan Ann Sulley of The Human League might have made had she wanted to sound like Siouxsie. Listening to *The Gate* you can smell the dry ice while you scramble for the sleeve to check that these are contemporary recordings. **PL**



JULIA FORDHAM JULIA FORDHAM

CHERRY POP



Julia Fordham was the Dido of her day, the doyenne of tasteful dinner-party soul-baring. And this was her 1988 debut, a none-more-Eighties affair judging by the company she kept: the credits bear the input of Bowie guitarist Carlos Alomar, percussionist Luis Jardim (ABC's *The Lexicon Of Love* and various ZTT albums), Tony Levin on bass and Afrodiziak on backing vocals. Fordham's sultry, adult tones suit the impeccable production and decorous arrangements, but in a way the perfectionism of the enterprise was its undoing, and it all ends up sounding a little too pat and sterile. Nevertheless, *Woman Of The '80s* remains a deft account of the period's nascent feminists, eager to exert their power while missing some of the romantic exigencies of a previous era. **PL**



TODD RUNDGREN THE COMPLETE BEARSVILLE ALBUMS COLLECTION

RHINO



Pining for Bowie and Prince? Try Rundgren, often described as the American Bowie – because he changed radically, both his music and style/image, from album to album, wore makeup and had Day-Glo hair – and the Seventies Prince. Intrigued? Then this 13CD box is for you. It features every album Rundgren made between 1970's *Runt*, his debut, and 1982's *The Ever Popular Tortured Artist Effect*. In between is some of the greatest pop ever made, ranging from the conventional (*Runt*, 1971's *The Ballad Of Todd Rundgren*, 1972's double masterwork *Something/Anything?*, 1978's *The Hermit Of Mink Hollow*) to the awesomely ambitious, esoteric and strange (1973's *A Wizard, A True Star*, 1974's *Todd*, 1975's *Initiation*). **PL**



SUGGS THE LONE RANGER

CHERRY RED



This is a 2CD Deluxe Edition of Suggs' first solo album, which charted at No. 14 in 1995, and it includes all related bonus material. It comes with the five singles taken from the album, the most successful of which was the Simon & Garfunkel cover *Cecilia*, peaking at No. 4, followed by the Madness frontman's take on The Beatles' *I'm Only Sleeping* (No. 7), produced by reggae rhythm overlords Sly & Robbie. Impressively, all five were Top 40 hits – the others being *Camden Town*, *The Tune* (penned by Madness songwriter Mike Barson), and *No More Alcohol*. Extra tracks include the single B-sides (*Bedazzled*, *Animal*, *When You Came*, *I Feel Good*), plus a noteworthy rendition of Supergrass' *Alright*, which makes sense because the latter Britpop scamps were in a way Madness' true Nineties sons and heirs. **PL**



GLORIA GAYNOR GLORIOUS

BBR



Never Can Say Goodbye (1974) and *I Will Survive* (1979) were massive international singles that pretty much bookended the disco era, but Gloria Gaynor was no two-hit wonder. Her albums were also largely worth investigating, and *Glorious* (1977) is no exception. Produced by Gregg Diamond – fresh from scoring a global smash with *More More* by Andrea True Connection – and featuring the arrangements of veteran concertmaster Gene Orloff, *Glorious* features a suite of strings-drenched rhapsodies (*We Can Start All Over Again*, *So Much Love*) and gotta-dance-to-keep-from-crying dancefloor entreaties (*Life Ain't Worth Living*, *This Side Of The Pain*). Released as the album's first single, *Most Of All* is the nine-minute languid peak, Gaynor cooing in a cool falsetto, barely recognisable from her hits. **PL**

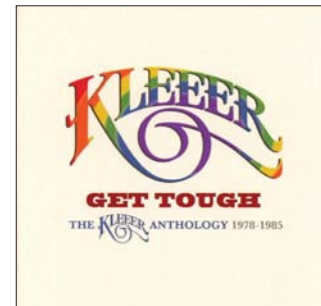


AL JARREAU BREAKIN' AWAY

BBR



Al Jarreau started out as a jazz singer in the Seventies but it was the ensuing decade that defined him – and that he in a small way, with his immaculate LA-polished wine bar jazz-funk, partly defined. *Breakin' Away*, from 1981, remains his most popular album, spending two years on the US charts, peaking at No. 9 and earning him two prestigious Grammy awards. Opener *Closer To Your Love* sounds like a dry run for the *Moonlighting* theme that Jarreau would later sing. The first single *We're In This Love Together* became a radio staple while other highlights include the scat singing on Dave Brubeck's (*Round, Round, Round*) *Blue Rondo A La Turk* and the lush cover of Sammy Cahn and Gene De Paul's *Teach Me Tonight*, which proved simultaneously how out of time Jarreau was and yet so of his time. **PL**



KLEER GET TOUGH: THE KLEER ANTHOLOGY 1978-1985

BBR



Kleeer started out in 1972 and, after a stint playing hard rock, went disco with Chic-influenced dancefloor anthems such as *I Love To Dance*, *Keep Your Body Workin'*, *It's Magic* and *Tonight's The Night (Good Time)*. Their increasingly propulsive sound adapted well to the Eighties with club hits *License To Dream* and *Get Tough* (1981) and *Get Ready*, *She Said She Loves Me* and *Taste The Music* (1982). Their fuller embrace of electronics made them peers of Peech Boys, Dazz Band et al and won them more converts, particularly with the albums *Intimate Connection* (1984) and *Seekret* (1985), produced by Kool & The Gang knob-twiddler Eumir Deodato. *You Did It Again*, *Go For It*, *Take Your Heart Away* and *Never Cry Again* are mid-Eighties electro-funk at its finest. **PL**

C87 VARIOUS ARTISTS

CHERRY RED

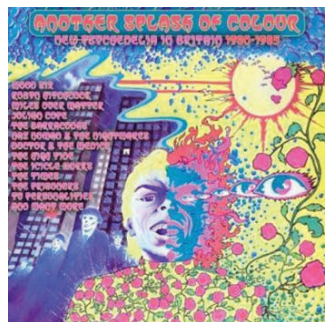


C86 was the name of a cassette given away free, via some coupons, with the *NME* in 1986. C87, five years earlier, featured the likes of Orange Juice, Josef K, James Chance, Funky Four + 1, and U2; C86 brought the story up to date and offered a glimpse inside the indie nation of the time – and instead of rap and funk it was mainly shambling, ramshackle indie that was the order of the day. Cherry Red put out a 3CD version in 2014;

Now here's the follow-up – indie one year down the line, in 1987, and it was in much the same state as it was in '86, or at least, it was according to this collection. So instead of featuring some of '87's more forward-looking acts – Young Gods, AR Kane – here it's wall-to-wall anoraks in bowlcuts all peddling different variations on a theme. Compiler and curator Neil Taylor has a singular vision and it is entirely focused on white indie bands, many of them in thrall to The Smiths and Sixties music at its most narrow and spindly. But if you want a snapshot of where jangly guitar music was at in between Live Aid and Madchester, before shoegazing, baggy and grunge, C87 does the job admirably, reminding us of that brief moment when The Sea Urchins, Talulah Gosh and Baby Lemonade – gawdelpus – set the alternative agenda. **PL**

ANOTHER SPLASH OF COLOUR: NEW PSYCHEDELIA IN BRITAIN 1980-1985 VARIOUS ARTISTS

CHERRY RED



The early-to-mid Eighties was a latter-day golden age of psych, and that is the period this 3CD collection – with a 9,000-word sleeve-note – celebrates. Listening to The Times' *I Helped Patrick McGoohan Escape*, complete with chunks from TV series *The Prisoner*, is like being transported back to 1967-68, but The Times were prime movers of this British nu-psych

scene; others included Mood Six, High Tide, Miles Over Matter and The Barracudas. This 64-track CD traces its roots back to postpunk and the mod revival, follows the movement to club nights such as the Groovy Cellar and finally focuses on its halcyon daze circa 1984-'85 with Julian Cope and Robyn Hitchcock jostling with newcomers such as The Jasmine Minks, the Revolving Paint Dream and Biff Bang Pow!, all signees to Creation Records, an early neo-psych haven. There are psych Scousers (Ian McNabb's Icicle Works), the Whaam! (not Wham!), camp (TV Personalities, Direct Hits, Marble Staircase, Le Mat), and the scene's sole chart-toppers, Doctor & The Medics, who are here with a previously unreleased track. Groovy! **PL**

SHARON SIGNS TO CHERRY RED VARIOUS ARTISTS

CHERRY RED



Sharon Signs To Cherry Red was the title of a dour slice of DIY indie, neatly self-mocking ("I promised to show my poetry and you promised not to laugh/ I didn't see you for two whole days and I wish that I was dead"), by an all-female outfit from Norwich called The Kamikaze Pilots. It wound up on the desk of the *NME*'s Danny Kelly, who dismissed it as "a plaintive

tribute to/assassination of all the earnest misery gobs ever signed to Cherry Red's roster, with particular reference to the Tracey Thorn pantheon". Now *Sharon...* has been turned into a 2CD celebration of all-female/female-only artists from the golden age of indie. The music – postpunk, mod and Sixties revival, rockabilly/cowpunk, garage rock, soul/funk, reggae/dub and pop – is the kind that would have received heavy rotation on John Peel's show. From Strawberry Switchblade (with a more droney version of early B-side *Go Away*) and Mari Wilson's Motown-adoring *If That's What You Want* to Vivien Goldman's dub-wise *Launderette* and Scream And Dance's tribal *In Rhythm*, the 45 artists here were galvanised by punk, and intent on doing things their way. **PL**

THE DUETS ALBUM VARIOUS ARTISTS

UNIVERSAL



What are the greatest duets of all time? This 2CD, 40-track album endeavours to answer that very question. It starts way back with Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong's *Dream A Little Dream Of Me*. Then we're in the Sixties with Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's *Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing*. From the same decade is Righteous Brothers' *You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling*, which is cheating a bit because they weren't a one-off meeting

of greats but a permanent partnership (ditto Sonny & Cher's *I Got You Babe*, Hall & Oates' *Maneater*, Ashford & Simpson's *Solid* and Charles & Eddie's *Would I Lie To You?*, all featured here). We shan't quibble, but move onto the Seventies for Elton and Kiki Dee's *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*, which possibly ties with David Bowie and Queen for *Under Pressure* as longest-running No. 1 in the UK charts. Also from the Eighties are Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder's *Ebony And Ivory*, arguably one of the worst-ever duets, and Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush's *Don't Give Up*, accompanied by that video which got everyone wondering, "Are they...?" Recent times are covered by Coldplay and Rihanna's *Princess Of China* and the glorious *Dilemma* by Nelly and Kelly Rowland. **PL**

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WIN! LOTS OF COOL STUFF

WE'VE SOME EXTREMELY TEMPTING PRIZES UP FOR GRABS IN THIS ISSUE INCLUDING ONE MIGHTY FINE GRACE JONES VINYL BOX SET, NEW ALBUMS FROM ALI CAMPBELL AND BUCKS FIZZ, AND SOME HIT COMPILATION CD BUNDLES – PLENTY FOR ALL MUSICAL TASTES! TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE, MAKE YOUR WAY TO WWW.CLASSICPOPMAG.COM AND CLICK ON 'COMPETITIONS'. GOOD LUCK!

1 x Grace Jones 'Warm Leatherette' deluxe 4LP vinyl box set worth £80!

Island gave us a superb reissue of Grace Jones' 1981 masterstroke *Nightclubbing* in 2014, and last year's *Disco* box set repurposed expanded editions of the *Portfolio*, *Fame* and *Muse* albums in serious style. Now they continue the good work with this lavish multi-format reissue of Grace Jones' fourth album, *Warm Leatherette*. Grace left disco behind for this project and reinvented herself with the help of producers Chris Blackwell and Alex Sadkin, reggae rhythm gods Sly and Robbie, and a roll call of other musical talent. Cover versions include tracks from The Pretenders, Roxy Music, Tom Petty, and The Normal, former band of Mute Records founder Daniel Miller. Aside from the remastered album, this beautiful set includes B-sides, rare mixes and instrumental versions. It's available as a 2CD deluxe edition, Blu-ray audio edition and 4LP vinyl box set, and we have one vinyl set to give away...

What was Grace Jones' debut single called?

- I Need A Man
- Do Or Die
- Sorry

Closing date: 11/08/2016



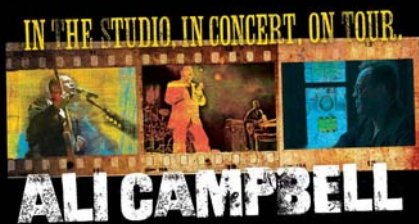
2 x Ali Campbell 'In The Studio, In Concert, On Tour: The Collection' box sets

This is pretty much everything that fans of ex-UB40 frontman Ali Campbell could want – a must-have box set that features the albums *Running Free*, *Flying High* and *Great British Songs* (all issued on vinyl for the first time) and a trio of DVDs: *Ali Campbell And Friends Live At The Royal Albert Hall*, *The Making Of 'Great British Songs'* and *On Tour With Ali Campbell*. There are numerous guest appearances across the release too including Kim Wilde, Pato Banton, Smokey Robinson, Beverley Knight, Mick Hucknall, Katie Melua and Lemar.

Ali Campbell was born in which city?

- London
- Manchester
- Birmingham

Closing date: 11/08/2016



THE COLLECTION



2 x Formerly Of Bucks Fizz OBF - 'Fame And Fortune' albums

2016 marks the 35th anniversary of Bucks Fizz's victory at Eurovision with *Making Your Mind Up*, and former members Cheryl Baker, Mike Nolan, Jay Aston and Bobby McVay toast their victory with a smart gatefold vinyl release of *OBF - Fame And Fortune* that arrives with a CD copy of the album as well as photos and personal fan messages. The brand new vinyl edition is on the shelves now, and the group take to the road for their *Make Believe UK* tour throughout the summer months and later in October. We have one copy of the *Fame And Fortune* album to give away! More at www.formerlyofbucksfizz.com

Q In what year did Bucks Fizz sing at Eurovision?

• 1980 • 1981 • 1982

Closing date: 11/08/2016

3 x sets of Eighties compilations

Demon Music Group have kindly delivered five sets of each of its new *100 Hits* 5CD compilations to the *Classic Pop* offices and they are now up for grabs for five lucky winners! There's plenty of variation to suit all tastes on offer here: *Pure 80s* features a hearty helping of the greatest artists of the decade; *Ultimate Number 1s* takes in The Jacksons, Adam & The Ants, Paul Young, Ian Dury & The Blockheads, The Bangles, Wham! and many, many more; *Power Ballads* contains a plethora of air guitar-indulging magic; *Peace & Love* packs some flower power with a varied cast of artists; and lastly, *Car Songs* is ideal for whiling away those long summer car journeys in full voice...

Q Who had a hit with the power ballad *More Than A Feeling*?

• Japan • Saxon • Boston

Closing date: 11/08/2016



TERMS & CONDITIONS

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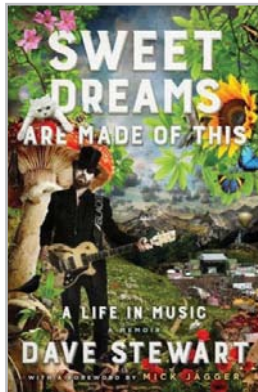
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SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS: A LIFE IN MUSIC

DAVE STEWART

VIKING PUBLISHING



She was working as a waitress in a health food store when he met her. Dave Stewart's life-changing meeting with Annie Lennox and their relationship, break-up and global fame as Eurythmics is just one of the compelling tales in his frank, enormously entertaining

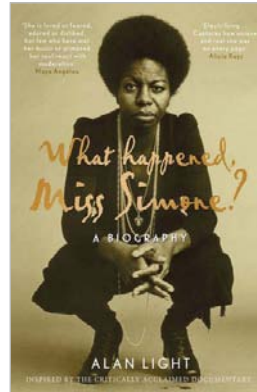
autobiography. It traces Dave's rise from a tough upbringing in Sunderland, where he was awarded a way out via Elton John's Rocket Records label; he blew the money on drugs, before his meeting with Lennox helped him kick cocaine and set them on the path to success.

The Eurythmics story is documented in great detail. He unflinchingly dispatches stories of being seduced by Stevie Nicks, used as a sounding board by Springsteen, and drug-fuelled road trips with everyone from Damien Hirst to Mick Jagger. Marriages and love affairs are all covered, as is his work with Tom Petty, No Doubt, Paul McCartney, Bono, Dylan and others. Stewart has lived the dream and it wasn't all sweet, but it makes for a hell of a read. **Mark Lindores**

WHAT HAPPENED, MISS SIMONE?

ALAN LIGHT

CANONGATE



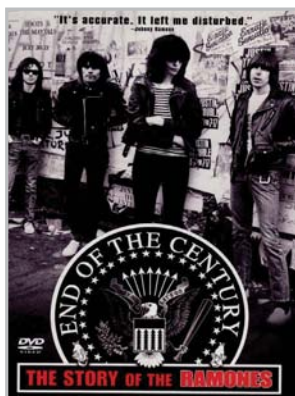
What Happened, Miss Simone? covers the same ground as the Academy Award-nominated Netflix docu of the same name, but it delves deeper. Esteemed journalist Alan Light does a concise job detailing the trials of Nina Simone without being overly intrusive. Her addictions,

troubled childhood, mental health issues and domestic abuse at the hands of her second husband all paint a tragic picture of a public figure who suffered extensively in private. Also covered are Simone's politics and beliefs and her campaigning for human rights and equality, an issue very much relevant in the light of the Black Lives Matter movement. A huge part of her anger was attributed to the fact that she felt that her race had stopped her from becoming a classical pianist. With access to Nina's personal diaries, photos and letters, Light manages to incorporate an intimate touch. The theme of injustice is prevalent, yet the greatest is that an artist who gave pleasure to so many was incapable of finding it for herself. **ML**

MY RAMONES

DANNY FIELDS

FIRST THIRD BOOKS



With a host of books, films, compilation albums, exhibitions, even a festival planned to celebrate punk's 40th anniversary, it seems only right that one of the first off the blocks is a book documenting the formative years of the godfathers of the whole thing, The Ramones.

Danny Fields, their first manager, captures the band during 1976-77, offering a

snapshot of the group at work and at play, hanging out with fellow punk pioneers such as Blondie's Debbie Harry and Chris Stein and capturing them on their first trip abroad to play their seminal show at London's Roundhouse, cited as a landmark performance in the breakthrough of punk in Britain. After seeing them play a 17-minute set at CBGBs, Danny approached them about becoming their manager. "I had to bribe them with \$3000 which they said they needed for a new set of drums. I went to Florida, asked my mother to lend me the money, and got the job. I photographed the band on tour, backstage, in the studio, walking around, meeting fans, seeing the sights and just checking things out," says Fields. With over 200 images chosen from his personal archive, this lavishly packaged book is an insightful look at the birth of a revolution. **ML**

DAVID BOWIE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE SCHAPIRO

STEVE SCHAPIRO

POWERHOUSE BOOKS



There's nothing like the death of an artist to inspire a barrage of releases, usually material which has previously been unseen with good reason, yet Steve Schapiro's genuinely great photos make a refreshing change from the overplayed Ziggy/glam period. This book comes with Bowie's blessing; Steve contacted him last

October to ask him to write something (Bowie declined, but wished him luck with the project). Capturing the singer in full-on Thin White Duke mode, it features Schapiro's 1974 shoot in full, including the haunting image of Bowie in dark trousers and shirt daubed with painted white diagonal stripes which he reprised for his final video, *Lazarus*. Elsewhere we see a burnt-out Bowie as he experimented with his plastic soul and played an alien in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, plus the images that made the covers of *People* and *Rolling Stone* as well as the cover art of the *Station To Station*, *Low* and *Nothing Has Changed* albums. A stunning exploration of one of Bowie's most experimental yet underappreciated periods; Schapiro's book is a great tribute to the great man. **ML**

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O2 ARENA, LONDON

26 MARCH



FRESHLY REJUVENATED AND THRILLED TO BE BACK IN THE UK, THE MIGHTY NORWEGIANS DELIVER A STYLISH AND HAUNTING SET ENCRUSTED WITH GLITTERING POP MOMENTS

In-fighting and solo agendas have threatened to derail the darlings of Norwegian pop on more than one occasion. Now returning in earnest to shop their tenth studio outing, *Cast In Steel*, the trio celebrate this landmark show as if it's a homecoming. "We lived in London for a decade and it shaped us as people and musicians," triumphs keyboardist Magne Furuholmen. A composed best-of set ensues, peppered with stripped-back renditions of newer material.

Frontman Morten Harket is every bit the steely veteran, remaining silent for the most part but still convincingly trading on his haunting vocals

and chiselled features, even at 56. Though visibly preoccupied with his monitors throughout, he warms to the occasion.

Older set-pieces dominate, delivered with studio precision and stadium rock resolve. Lush classic *Hunting High And Low* sees Morten's ethereal falsetto morph into a crowd singalong during the acoustic interludes. *The Swing Of Things* is a bold reminder that they were unsung trailblazers for next-generation indie upstarts like Keane. James Bond theme *The Living Daylights* is a gamechanger as they ditch the synths for a salvo of straight-up rock, complete with football terrace-style chanting from nostalgic fans. Later, guitarist Paul Waaktaar-

Savoy delivers *Velvet*, a gem from sister band Savoy's back catalogue, with a convincing vocal to boot. Magne follows suit and is only too pleased to call on some audience support when he takes the lead during *Lifelines*, admitting humbly: "I am definitely not a singer."

A cover of Carole King's *Crying In The Rain* is a little too West End musical, but they make up for it with majestic blues rocker *Sycamore Leaves* as Morten returns to huge crowd acclaim. Stunning comeback single *Under The Makeup* proves they can still cut the mustard in the songwriting stakes, although opening lyric "This is how it ends" is misleading given what follows.

Whirring title track *Cast In Steel* sits well within the A-ha mould of reverb-drenched balladry. They finally drop their big hitters during, not one, but two tantalising encores. Kicking off the first with arpeggio banger *The Sun Always Shines On TV*, fans are drawn into the aisles for the first time. It seems almost conceited when they leave the stage again without even a nod to breakthrough hit *Take On Me*, but all is forgiven as they cheekily resurface to unleash that unmistakable blast of synth power, and Morten still manages to pull off those seething high notes. For a combo that essentially started out as boyband pinups, they've aged like a fine wine. **Mik Curtis**

EDDIE READER GATESHEAD SAGE 2

23 MARCH



With her loyal fan base and a drum-free but versatile four-piece acoustic band, Eddi Reader enjoys a lot of freedom. She has an extensive and varied back catalogue; tonight's show includes a version of *You're My World* with Cilla Black-nuanced vocals, the bluegrass-tinged *Humming Bird*, several Robert Burns poems set to music and even a song about her cat, while Reader's version of *Love Is A Losing Game* is a crystal-clear, sensuous alternative spin on Amy Winehouse's Sixties girl chanteuse pastiche.

Reader is a natural storyteller, perfectly suited to an intimate venue like the Sage 2. An anecdote about growing up part of a large family in Glasgow is followed by a stripped-down and folksy *Perfect*, her nod to pop stardom as the lead singer on Fairground Attraction's 1988 No 1. *Patience Of Angels* from her eponymous 1994 solo album is probably her second-most well-known song but gets squeezed out tonight because of an early curfew.

Reader herself is the main reason this audience keep coming back to the shows. You can imagine she'd be a great best mate, able to spin a tale at the drop of a hat. It doesn't matter that sometimes the link between her stories

and the songs that follow is a bit tenuous – as when she tells us about a violent incident at the cinema behind her house, where a showing of *50 Shades Of Grey* resulted in three ambulances being called and a gang of over-enthusiastic female fans being carted away in the paddy wagon: this, somehow, leads into Reader's clap-along version of *Charlie Is My Darling*. Later, she reprises her late father's Elvis impersonation, which metamorphoses into Auntie Betty's Patsy Cline. Then, in mock-shock, she relates the astonishment of her family when, as a 20 year-old, she returned to Scotland singing in French after 12 months busking in France. The trauma was enough to send another auntie to the local deli in search of 'mangy twat' – aka mange tout.

After an acapella version of *My Love Is Like A Red Red Rose* the show closes with *You're Welcome Willie Stewart*, the Robert Burns song. This climaxes with a jig, and for the first time, all four members of the band are on their feet, with guitarist Boo Hewerdine (almost) pulling a rock god pose. Reader and the guys didn't do anything that wouldn't work in a folk club but it's executed with such warmth, humour and expertise that the audience clearly enjoyed every second of it. **Ian Ravendale**

THE STRANGLERS 02 ACADEMY, NEWCASTLE

9 MARCH



In the late Seventies The Stranglers were the bad boys of pop. Too mature in age and musical dexterity to be punks, they still managed to engage in punk-like antics including challenging other bands to fights (never taken up, as bass player Jean-Jacques Burnel has a 7th dan black belt in karate) short prison sentences, and kidnapping a music journalist.

These days it's all about the music. The current lineup includes originals Burnel and keyboard player Dave Greenfield, with Jim MacAulay standing in for Jet Black on drums for live shows, and Baz Warne – who joined when Hugh Cornwell left 15 years ago – sharing frontman duties with Burnel. Warne is a formidable guitarist and a vocalist who can snarl out The Stranglers' more vitriolic songs like the chauvinistic *Peaches* or tone it down for gentle offerings such as *Always The Sun*.

The Stranglers take to the stage after a well-received set by Mike Peters' Alarm. This 2016 tour celebrates 1978's *Black And White*, the third album. There's a predominantly white backdrop and all-white backline of amps, keyboards and drum kit, but the band themselves are in black, as usual, apart from Baz's stand-out white shoes. The solid slab of songs taken from *Black And*

White is a bit heavy going for anyone not familiar with the album. We're left in no doubt that this section is finished when the previously subdued lights explode into a flurry of colour and *(Get A) Grip (On Yourself)* thunders in with the signature sound of JJ's aggressive boing-boinging bass and Greenfield's melodic, swirling keyboards.

The Stranglers have an impressive back catalogue of songs which work well live, and the outfit play most of their hits. *Walk On By*, the band's alternative take on the Bacharach-David classic, allows Warne to lay down a tasty chiming guitar solo. The catchy 3/4 time harpsichord melody of *Golden Brown* diverts attention from the double-edged lyrical sword of temptation from sex and drugs. *Go Buddy Go* is The Stranglers all fire and brimstone, as the audience punch the air and join in the chorus. Final song of the night *No More Heroes* powers along, and the message of not kow-towing to leaders and politicians resonates as much today as it did in 1977. Missing were *Strange Little Girl*, *Skin Deep* and *European Female*, all of which would have probably been better received than the *Black And White* section. That aside, The Stranglers are still a kick-ass rock band. **Ian Ravendale**



Alexandra Bone





Dave Hagan

GARY BARLOW AND FRIENDS ONE MAYFAIR, LONDON

18 MARCH



AN UNLIKELY GATHERING OF HIT-MAKERS ASSEMBLE AROUND ONE OF THE UNLIKELYST SPORTING STORIES OF MODERN TIMES. IT'S AN ODDITY FOR SURE, BUT WILL IT FLY?

Take That star Gary Barlow brought together a cast of the biggest names in Eighties pop at this one-night only show to celebrate the launch of movie soundtrack, *Fly*.

It's a project inspired by the film *Eddie The Eagle*, which charts the rise of unlikely skiing hero Eddie Edwards, and while Gary admits he could have copped out by recording cover versions of tunes from the period, instead he's enlisted some of the best-known performers of the era to deliver a batch of newly-penned tracks.

With an introduction by Dermot O'Leary, fans could be forgiven for mistaking proceedings for an *X-Factor*

pilot, but they quickly get over that when Eddie himself turns up to toast his second wind of fame. To open, OMD's Andy McCluskey joins Barlow to drive the bass on synth rocker *Thrill Me*, minus Hollywood star Hugh Jackman who features on the album version and was rumoured to have been making a cameo. Then Gary slopes off, leaving the rest of the night to his Eighties friends as they interweave original material with their greatest hits.

Spandau Ballet legend Tony Hadley is the most animated and jubilant on the bill, drawing a tenuous link between his band's hit *Gold* and Eddie's designs on Olympic triumph. Vocally he steals the show, proving he's still a pop

powerhouse, hitting daring operatic highs amidst lush sax solos and sips of whiskey.

On the comeback trail with a new tour in the works, Paul Young is eager to please during 1983 hit *Come Back And Stay*. While his trademark husky delivery is a little strained, he still manages to get the female contingent hot under the collar once he settles into things.

No strangers to movie soundtracks, excitable duo Go West dig out *Pretty Woman* movie hit *King Of Wishful Thinking*, with frontman Peter Cox as soulful and distinctive as he ever was. Dermot awkwardly introduces Nik Kershaw as Haircut One Hundred frontman Nick Heyward by mistake, but Nik

K takes it well, jibing "I'm actually Howard Jones in glasses". Fly tune *The Sky's The Limit* could easily be one of his early singles, while *Wouldn't It Be Good* drives the biggest singalong of the evening before he unleashes a mean guitar solo. Techno pioneer Howard Jones turns in a textbook rendition of metallic hit *What Is Love*, high-fiving fans on the breaks, and a glitter-clad Holly Johnson introduces the band before closing with a dramatic take on the soaring *Ascension*.

Although a little disjointed at times, this convention of Eighties veterans is a rare window into a decade of decadence that still seems relevant. Let's just hope they all played nicely backstage. **Mik Curtis**

TORSTEN, THE BEAUTIFUL LIBERTINE

ABOVE THE STAG THEATRE, LONDON

18 MARCH



Sadly, even exuberant pop stars and drag queens fail to escape mortality. This theatre production finds Erasure's Andy Bell channelling these concerns into the fading halcyon days of alter ego Torsten the Libertine, who haunts the bedsit flat of some sordid suburb as two of Soho's finest underachievers rage against their age. They compete with the spilled contents of a skip containing unclaimed prizes from Eighties TV quiz shows, scattered with half-finished cocktails and smouldering rouge-tipped cigarettes, not to mention embittered ambitions.

Bell's tenor is in fine fettle as flatmates Lana P and Peter Straker stalk the thin line between themselves and their characters (Straker, once a close associate of Freddie Mercury, brings particular nobility to bear on the material). It's an orgy of euphemisms, with little plot to speak of, but the music shines, exposing the tragedy of living with dreams and impulses never intended to age. It explores the cost of carefree youth, and a poorly soundproofed communal toilet; it's all rather reminiscent of *Netherwood*, the Hastings care home for eccentric arty types

in which the notorious Aleister Crowley saw out his last days.

Like a man drinking from the fountain of youth, only to later discover a dead fox floating in it, the friends are legends in their own minds. It's as quotable as the *Bond Street Catalogue*, which lends itself to fine harmonising and a biting tune. Bell is on solid form, with *My Precious One* echoing Erasure, but otherwise finding new light. It questions a gay scene that values looks and virility above all else. Despite the lack of story, there's defiance, although the hurt and loss behind the bravado is seldom far away.

I Am The Boy From The Sauna fails to achieve any subtlety awards, but it's a rare misstep. Bell might be wearing the huissier sash with nowhere left to charge, but apparently writer Barney Ashton sees a future for Torsten. However, for now, as lingering hopes for legendary shags crumble, it's hard to see another day – yet something resilient remains about the pursuit of pleasure at all cost. *Torsten, The Beautiful Libertine* is an exhilarating statement, although it's the gentle affection between our washed-up cabaret stars that lingers. **Tom Hocknell**



Naomi Dryden-Smith

THE REAL THING

GATESHEAD SAGE 2

27 MARCH



In the Seventies and Eighties the UK charts were crammed chockablock with home-grown soul acts like Heatwave, Sweet Sensation, Hi-Tension, Shakatak, and – the most successful of them all, with a run of hits stretching from 1976 to 1986 – Liverpool's Real Thing. The Sage 2 is an intimate, all-seated venue, but the majority of tonight's audience are up and dancing from the word go and become as much a part of the show as The Thing and their tight five-piece band. John Chapman's fruity saxophone supplies the razzamatazz while Stuart Ansell rips out some tasty lead guitar lines, allowing Chris and Eddie Amoo and Dave Smith to run through their catalogue of hits.

The Real Thing have a huge amount of experience behind them: Eddie Amoo is a member of The Chants, who played The Cavern around the same time as The Beatles (who occasionally backed them). Consequently everything about tonight's performance is well-judged, from the size and quality of the venue to the level of the musicianship, from the cover versions included alongside The Real Thing's own repertoire to the general good-time vibe of the gig.

Rather than padding the show out with B-sides or

obscure album tracks, the trio treat us to some other major dance tracks of the period including Kool and the Gang's *Ladies Night* and *Celebration* and McFadden and Whitehead's *Ain't No Stopping Us Now*. These are all well-chosen winners geared to the age group of tonight's audience, who would have been clubbing it when the originals were in the charts.

Bringing the tempo down, Eddie Amoo demonstrates how high he can go on Philip Bailey's *Children Of The Ghetto*. Brother Chris doesn't soar so far but he's instantly recognisable as the lead vocal on the majority of the outfit's hits, and *You To Me Are Everything, Can't Get By Without You, Rainin' Through My Sunshine* and *Can You Feel The Force* have the audience bopping, waving and joining in. These Britsoul numbers are every bit as good as what was coming across the Atlantic from the likes of Kool and the Gang, and miles more funky than the dicky-bow R&B pumped out by The Chi-Lites and Tavares.

There are usually a few Sixties, Seventies and Eighties package tours doing the rounds. On the evidence of tonight, maybe it's time for a UK soul package with The Real Thing headlining. **Ian Ravendale**





Getty Images

ADELE SSE ARENA, BELFAST

29 FEBRUARY



THE SINGER'S ENDEARING STAGE BANTER MAY BE SLIGHTLY AT ODDS WITH HER MATERIAL, BUT THERE'S NO DENYING THE POWER OF THAT VOICE OR THAT IMPRESSIVE CATALOGUE

Maintaining an air of mystery used to be part and parcel of being a popstar. Then along came wise-cracking Adele, and everything changed forever. The Londoner might avoid interviews but on stage she's totally uncontained, divulging everything from candid celebrity encounters to her most recent bowel movements. "This is my first time in an arena ever – I have been sh*tting myself," she cackles. "But I had an Imodium and I'm fine... I could get used to this."

She catches fans off-guard by emerging, Houdini-style, from a trap door within a mini satellite

stage to sing – you guessed it – *Hello*. Aside from an attack of giggles, it's a sophisticated start to a subtly spectacular show and the sound of Adele's music follows her in the speakers as she sashays through a throng of adoring fans towards the main stage. The curtain drops, revealing a 21-piece band cranking out early hit *Hometown Glory* accompanied by images of Adele's Tottenham home and local Belfast landmarks, accompanied by whoops from the crowd.

Bar hand-written confetti and an amazing holographic rainstorm during *Fire To The Rain*, there are few bells and whistles to distract the audience. The experience is all

about Adele's incredible voice and her ability to connect with the masses. Songs about her no-good ex still speak loudest to the majority, with 25's best ballad *All I Ask* bringing out the industrial-size Kleenex. "I would dance now," she advises to any reluctant male partners, "because some of my songs get quite depressing."

But these days the North Londoner doesn't cut the same lovelorn figure she once did; in fact she can't disguise how good life is, tickling ribs with gags about her derrière and how she wears so much make up that she looks like a drag queen. This new self-assurance suits Adele and there is an unadulterated joy in her voice

as she sings *Sweetest Devotion*, dedicated to young son Angelo. Apparently she was advised not to speak until after the first three songs to allay her legendary nerves; more likely it was so Adele's chatter wouldn't jar with the sentiment of her more moving ballads... after all, *Skyfall* comes accompanied by a tale of breast-feeding in the toilets with Jennifer Garner, while the emotional gravitas of *Someone Like You* evaporates as she guffaws, "I had to do an emergency shave on my legs". It's all part of the wonderful contradiction that is Adele. Her voice is incredible... and no doubt by the end of the year we will know all of her bathroom habits. **Rudy Bolly**

RUDIMENTAL

02 ACADEMY, NEWCASTLE

29 FEBRUARY



Rudimental were voted the BBC's Best Festival Band a couple of years ago, and on tonight's showing it's easy to see why. There's so much happening here, with ska, reggae, drum and bass, soul, rap and house all blending together in a fiery non-stop musical mash-up that gets the audience punching the air.

For most of the set there are 10 people on stage. The four core members – Amir Amor, Piers Agget, Kesi Dryden and DJ Locksmith – are joined by three brass players, one of whom, Tom Heard, lays down his trumpet to take his share of lead vocals. The other main vocalists are Tom Jules and Bridgette Amofah and the trio are on stage most of the time, either fronting the band or singing backing. Fourth vocalist Anne-Marie Nicholson is used more sparingly, getting her own set in the middle of the show.

The reggae/ska groove of *System* kicks the show off in high energy style. Amofah fronts the band for *Right Here*, a song that has lots of different things going on, particularly when the chorus cuts in and a cartload of drum and bass rhythms get the audience going crazy. *I Will For Love*, sung by Heard, has the place jiggling and jumping to the non-stop rhythms, drops and chanting that's being fired

from the stage. Lots of different musical and sonic treats go on simultaneously, producing that all-happening Rudimental groove. The audience need no encouragement to get involved, particularly on the chart hits like *Feel The Love* and *Never Let You Go*. Sung by Jules, the song is a souped-up tale of romance gone bad delivered over a bed of frantic back beats. Heard takes to the stage front for *Free*, standing in for Emeli Sandé, demonstrating that strong melodies lurk behind the machine-gun arrangements.

The show is very drum and bass-centric but the band don't have a bass guitarist and most of the bottom end comes from synths and sequencers. At the heart of it all is a bunch of good songs, written and produced by the core quartet. Original singers Ella Eyre, John Newman, and Becky Hill aren't here tonight but Heard, Amofah and Jules do a fine job of standing in, and no one seems to mind. It's maybe difficult to imagine a drum-and-bass ballad but Rudimental have a couple that they even manage to get rap sections in. The show finishes with *Waiting All Night*, delivered as one big freak out by the band and sung by Bridgette Amofah before the audience happily make their way to the exit covered in confetti. **Ian Ravendale**

THE WONDER STUFF

02 ACADEMY, NEWCASTLE

5 MARCH



The Wonder Stuff's place in the sun was the late Eighties to the early Nineties, with 13 Top 40 hits and headline spots at Reading and Glastonbury. Fallouts, splits, solo projects and the usual band bizzo followed until they got back together in late 2000.

Tonight's show starts with a taped collage of the band's most memorable tunes. Included is *Dizzy*, the Tommy Roe cover that the band and Vic Reeves took to No. 1 in 1991. The two five-second snippets are the only appearance the song makes. No Reeves tonight to tunelessly batter his way through it, of course, but the non-appearance in the show was maybe a bit elitist.

Quirky, off-the-wall lyrics and melodies like *The Size Of A Cow* and *It's Yer Money I'm After Baby* mean The Wonder Stuff sound unlike anyone else. Only vocalist Miles Hunt remains from the original lineup; new guitarist Dan Donnelly has been with the Stuffies for less than a year, and he's obviously having a great time. Violinist Erica Nockalls (aka Mrs Miles) would be an asset to any band. Clad in a red Carmen Miranda dress, she adds some wonderfully searing, soaring fiddle and the occasional backing vocal. The sassy Nockalls makes a nice contrast to the lads-togetherness

of Hunt, Donnelly and bass player Mark McCarthy and their knee-level guitars.

Hunt's sister-in-law joins on keyboards about halfway through the set, kicking off with *The Size Of A Cow*'s speeded up *Strawberry Fields* intro. The Stuffies' stuff always pops along smartly, especially when the audience are joining in with the fun. Hunt is a cocky frontman who earns a cheer by name-checking Newcastle's now-departed but fondly remembered Riverside and Mayfair venues, while late lamented members Martin Gilks and Rob 'Bass Thing' Jones – along with Kirsty MacColl, who sang on *Welcome To The Cheapseats* – also earn a round of applause.

The band are promoting their eighth album *30 Goes Around The Sun*, which has just made the Top 40. "We've only waited 22 years for a return to the charts!" cracks Hunt before powering into *Cartoon Boyfriend* and then telling us that if he'd known 30 years ago he'd still be doing this he'd have written some slower, quieter songs. For set closer *Good Night Though* he hands his guitar over to his brother and screams, howls and generally throws himself around as the stage lights go bananas. Fun gig. But they should have done *Dizzy*. **Ian Ravendale**





No. 23

KYLIE MEETS PIERRE

AUGUST 1997

This is the hardest Classic Pop Moment we've had to write... though the moment itself was hilarious. Kylie Minogue was in the eye of the storm: transitioning from *Deconstruction*-era club kid to the indie temptress of *Some Kind Of Bliss*. The photo was taken at Bliss co-writer James Dean Bradfield's studio when Pierre Perrone — legendary music journalist, *Classic Pop* stalwart and *bon viveur* — arrived for an interview. Pierre came from the eye of a storm, too, literally soaked to his skin, but Kylie was quick to towel dry his hair before they sat down to talk. It's a photo full of the *joie de vivre* that infected all of Pierre's interviews, writing and life in general. Contributing to this magazine from Issue Two onwards and dedicated to the very last, Pierre submitted a feature — Issue 22's Godfathers of Pop piece with Cathal Smyth/Chas Smash — the night before he lost his battle with cancer. He devoured pop music and pop culture fast and furiously, and critiqued it and celebrated it at equal pace. And he will be missed, greatly.

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